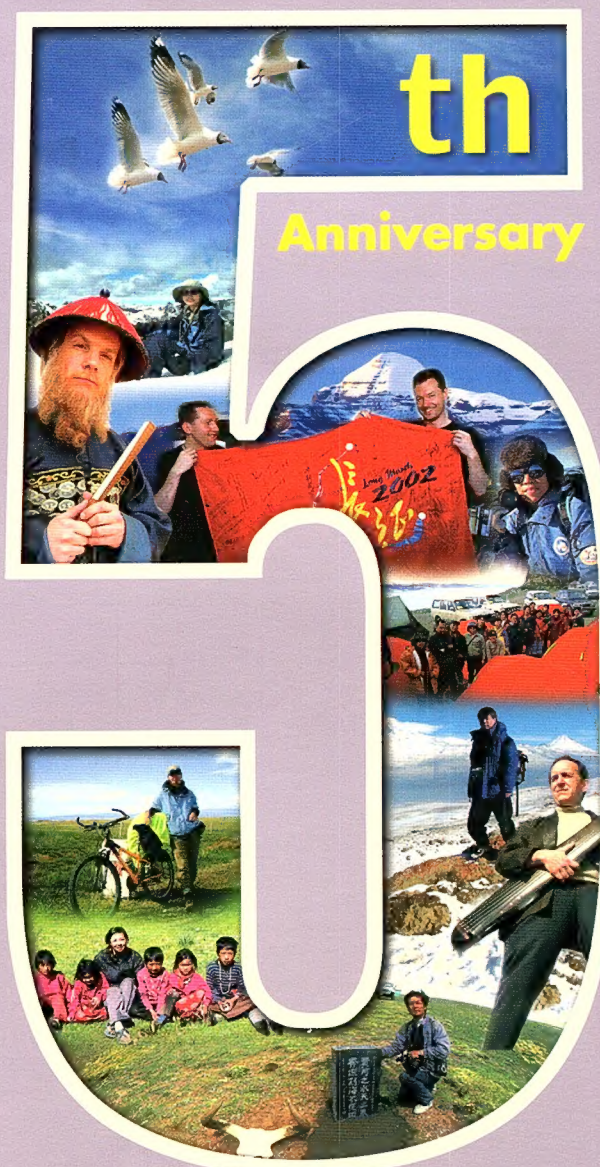


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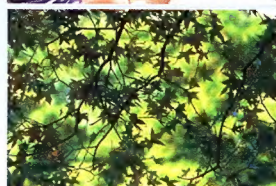
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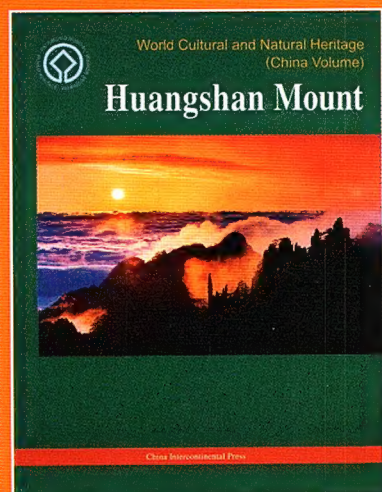
Mt. Huangshan, situated in the south of Anhui

Province, is one of the most famous scenic areas in China. Being put into the World Heritage List, it is also granted with two laurels of cultural heritage and natural heritage by the UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

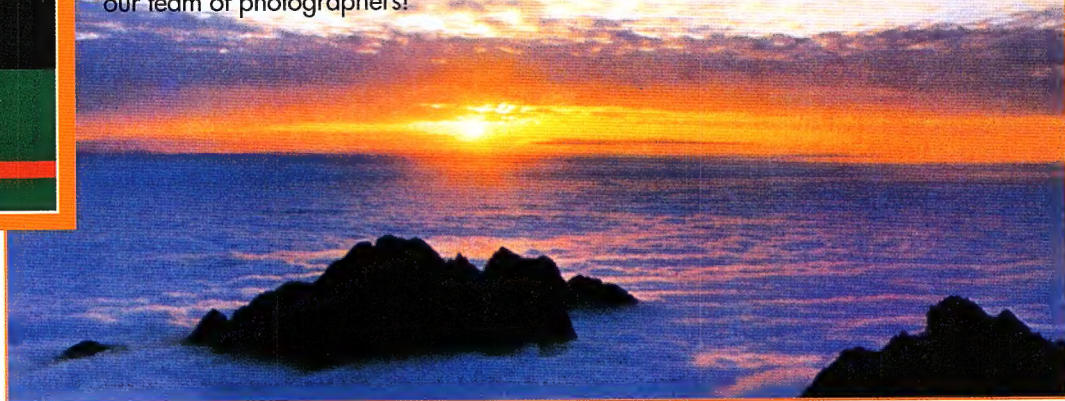
The landscape of the mountain is a typical granite hoodoo landform shaped during the long geological periods by several tectonic movements in the crust. Mt. Huangshan has long been famous for its strange-looking pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs.

All over one thousand metres above sea level, there are 77 peaks in the scenic area of almost two hundred square kilometres. Granite rock forests and rock columns together with massive rocks scatter everywhere. Moreover, Mt. Huangshan is a diverse ecosystem with a treasure of wildlife. There are approximately 1450 species of plants, 300 species of vertebrates and 170 species of birds.

Combined unique scenery and magnificent sea of clouds, the beauty of Mt. Huangshan has continued to fascinate endless visitors. Catch a glimpse of its glory in this "Huangshan Mount" pictorial that is filled with breath-taking images taken by our team of photographers!



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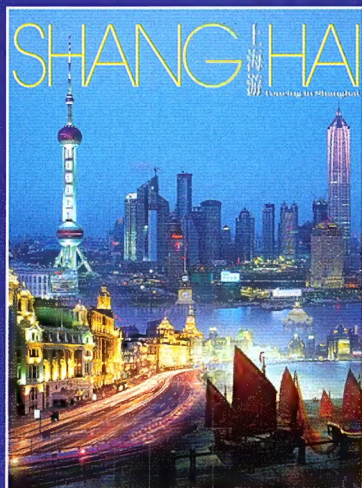
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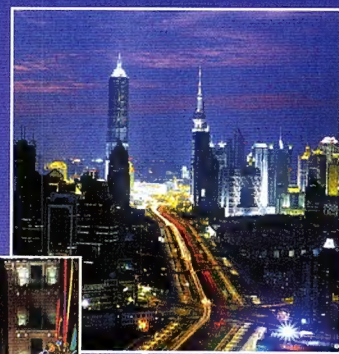
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through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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The 25 Most Wanted Things to Do in China

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of our publication, we picked 25 people from all walks of life and had them to share about the things they wish to do in China.

80 Landscapes

Badanjilin Desert: A Sea of Golden Silk

Photos by Wang Jin Article by Hu Yang, Wang Jin

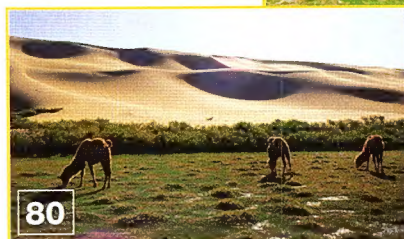
The 44,300-km² Badanjilin Desert is the third largest desert in China. In this boundless golden sea of sands, its more than 140 lakes form the most magnificent scenery.

84 Nature

Tracking Giant Pandas

Photos & Article by Huo Yimen

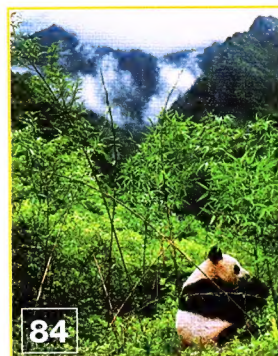
As the number one national treasure, pandas are seen as tamed, clumsy and sluggish. But Contrary to general conception, wild pandas can be aggressive and quick to kill.



80



14



84





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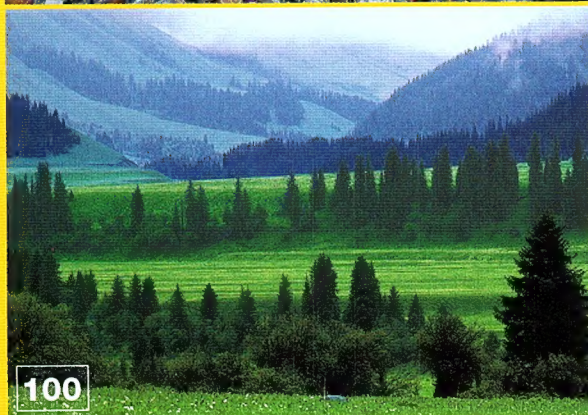
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88 Custom

Aobao Ceremony: A Grand Event on the Grassland

Photos & Article by Du Dianwen

Being the herdsmen's hottest event of the year, the traditional Aobao sacrificial ceremony, held in the sixth month of the lunar calendar, is a combination of religious and recreational activities.

92 On the Way

The Silvery Glacier: Hailuoguo

Photos & Article by Li Yiming

Hailuoguo's 1,080-m-high ice waterfall is the world's second largest - only 20 m shorter than the one in Rocky Mountain of Canada.

96 Culture

Traditional Papermaking in Tantou

Photos & Article by Lao Hou

Surrounded by a boundless sea of bamboo in Hunan Province, Tantou is the home of various kinds of paper products made by traditional methods.

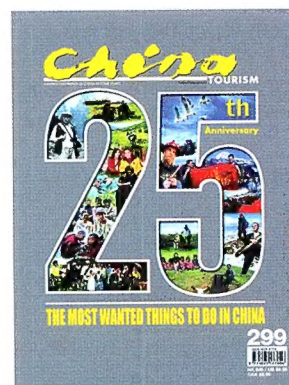
100 On the Way

Ili: The Journey to Tianshan

Photos by Zhao Chengan, Shi Baoxiu and Li Xiaoliang Article by Shi Baoxiu

As the saying goes, "One can neither comprehend the grandness of the world nor the beauty of nature without visiting Xinjiang." In Ili, you can find all sorts of scenery and landscapes.

144 Next Issue





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No.299 Sept/Oct 2005

FROM THE EDITOR

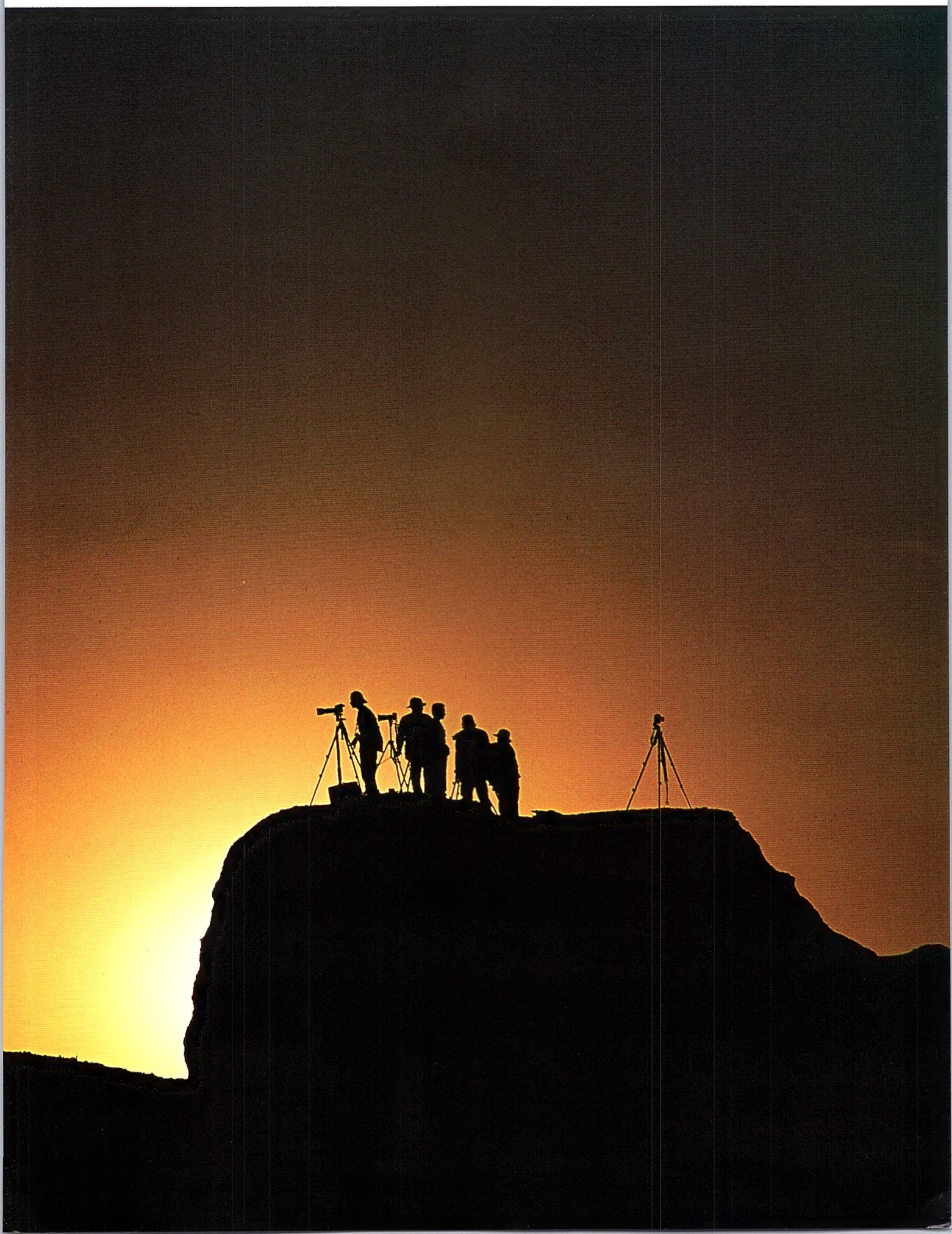
25 Most Wanted Things to Do in China

Only the ones with a relentless spirit can make a difference
in life.

Those people will walk an extra mile. Ask the seemingly
obvious questions. Dare to take one more step. Pick the road
less travelled.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of our publication, we
picked 25 people who dare to leave their mark behind in China
to share their stories. We hope their experience will inspire you
to echo your own dreams. We wish that you will compose your
own things-to-do list and accomplish all items in your lifetime.

In wait of sunrise (by Nie Baiyi)



China

English Edition

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SEP/OCT



Sep 3, 10, 18, 24 & Oct 1

Macao International Fireworks Display Contest

Venue: waterfront near the Macao Tower

What's On: There are teams from all around the globe participating in the firework contest. There will be ten teams performing this year, with two different teams showing their expertise each night.

Sep 18~21

West Lake Mid-Autumn Festival Party

Venue: Hangzhou, Zhejiang

What's On: West Lake is one of the ideal places to appreciating the moon during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Tourist can cruise on the lake at night and enjoy local delicacies. There will also be acrobatics and folk music performance.

Sep 9~11

Quyang International Sculpture Festival

Venue: Baoding, Hebei

What's On: Held in Quyang, a town in Hebei famous for sculpture since Han Dynasty, the festival features conference, exhibition, and firework. A selection of traditional sculpture will be sold.



Now til 9 Oct

Zhangjiakuo Grassland Festival

Venue: Guyuan Prefecture, Zhangjiakuo, Hebei

What's On: Zhangjiakuo is a city along the broader of Hebei and Inner Mongolia, and has one of the nicest grassland in China. The programmes include singing contest, parties on the grassland and photo exhibition, all under the theme of Green Tourism.

Oct 6

International Hikka Festival

Venue: Ninghua, Fujian

What's On: Ninghua is believed to be the born place of Hikka culture. The festival offers sacrifices to the Hikka ancestors. The elaborated ceremony attracts million Hikka people from all around the world.

Sep 28-Oct 12

China Qufu International Confucius Culture Festival

Venue: Qufu, Shandong

What's On: The festival is one of the largest celebrations for commemorating the Confucius. The programmes include an inauguration ceremony, activities to offer sacrifices to Confucius and theatrical performances.

Sep 16~22

Pingyao Anti-Fascist Photo Exhibition

Venue: Pingyao, Shanxi

What's On: On the 60 anniversary of the end of WWII, Pingyao, known as a photography city, holds the annual exhibition under the theme of love and peace this year. There will be more than 130 exhibitions showing 8,000 pieces of photo.

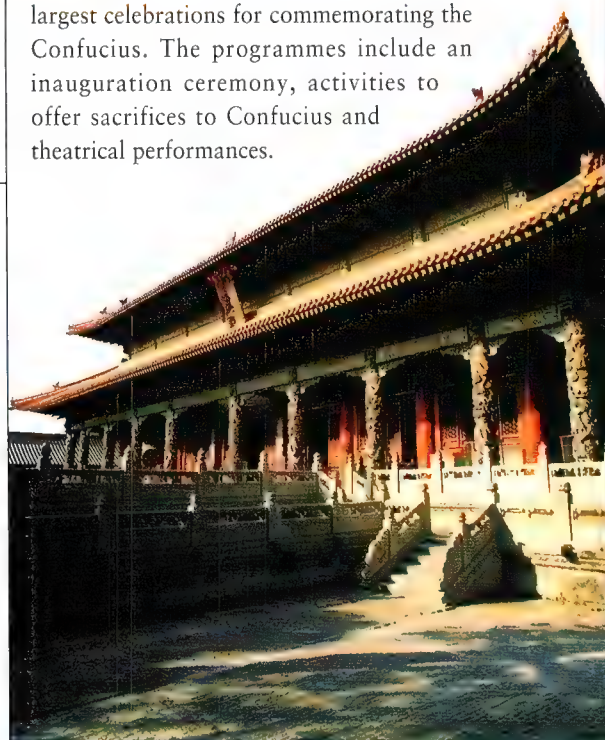


Oct 3~10

Yarlung Zangbo Great Canyon Tourist Festival

Venue: Nyingchi, Tibet

What's On: Nyingchi Prefecture, located in southeast Tibet, has the finest forest in the region, and one of the world's greatest canyon, the Yarlung Zangbo Great Canyon. The festival features water sports on the Yarlung Zangbo River, exploration of the canyon, visit to the ancient bombs, and pilgrimage to Basong Lake. It also introduces Tibetan medicine and culture.



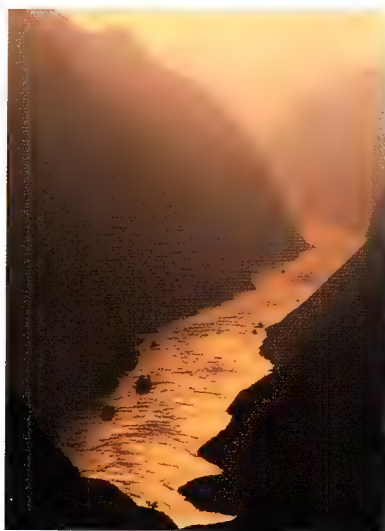


Grant to Restore Silk Road

More than ¥80 million (US \$9.6 million) could go to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to restore the Silk Road. The head of the Xinjiang Bureau of Cultural Heritage said that the State has promised to invest ¥80 million (US \$9.6 million) each year in the protection project.

Disney Targets Mainlanders

The Walt Disney was planning a range of projects in China, including a theme park, after Hong Kong Disneyland's opening in September. The company's primary targets would be building a park in the mainland, launching the Disney Channel and developing their presence media platforms, and, of course, making more Disney films.



Culture Relics Unearthed in Three Gorges

More than 200 pieces of cultural relics from the Han Dynasty (220 B.C.-26 A.D.) to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) were discovered in Zigui county, Hubei, during an excavation at the Three Gorges area. The unearthed items include a garlic-shaped bronze pot, an 18-cm-wide jade piece, and two pottery pots of the Han Dynasty, which are all rare in this area. A large number of relics such as Ding (an ancient cooking vessel with two loop handles and three legs), kettles, pottery wares were also discovered.

Green Organisation to Protect Wildlife

Guangdong is expected to establish the country's first coastal green belt by expanding mangrove plantations. The five-year project is also seen as an effort to protect the wetlands and wildlife in the province's coastal areas. By planting a large number of mangroves, the wetlands will become a green "Great Wall" along the coastal areas to protect and encourage the return of wildlife species. As part of the campaign launched earlier this year, ¥500 million (US \$60 million) has been earmarked to plant 50,000 ha of mangroves in the wetlands.



Gift to Fund Nushu Museum

Thanks to a gift from the Ford Foundation, a unique museum to record and preserve Nushu language will be built in 2007 in Jiangyong County in Hunan. An amount of US \$209,000, in forms of sponsorship from the U.S.-based charitable foundation, will be granted to the local authorities, with the aim of preserving the rare culture of Nushu language, which is threatened with extinction. The museum shows 80 manuscripts, and audio record of over 1,000 songs, as well as a wide range of articles and artifacts, many of which have a history that can be traced back over 100 years. As a written and spoken language used only by women, Nushu was discovered by linguists in Jiangyong County in the 1980s.

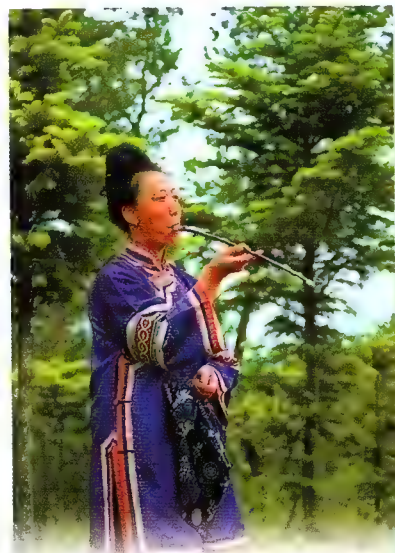
Ethnic Museums to be Built in Guangxi

Three museums featuring the culture of ethnic minorities are scheduled to be built in Guangxi. The museums, featuring cultural artifacts from the Jing, Maonan, and Mulam, the three ethnic minority groups living in Guangxi, will be built in Dongxing, Huanjiang Maonan Autonomous County, and Luo Cheng Mulam Autonomous County in the coming five years respectively. The project constitutes part of the region's programme of establishing an "eco-museums", a concept promoted by the French in the 1970's.



Ningxia Great Wall Destroyed

Ravaging by wind and rain and increasingly frequent deliberate human damage, the Great Wall is struggling to cope with old age. It has been reported that about one-third of the 1,500 km Great Wall in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region has disappeared. A part of the Great Wall, about 200 m in the region, was cut in the middle by a construction project.



China to Publish Books of Dying Manchu Folk Art

China will publish a series of Chinese books on "ulabun," a type of Manchu folk art by speech and song, which is on the brink of extinction. The work will be in ten volumes with 1.5 million words. "Ulabun" is an oral performance depicting Manchu legends that can be dated back to ancient times. It serves as religious ceremonies and promotes clan education.

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HK-Hohhot

New Flight Connects Hong Kong with Hohhot

Air Mongolia operated its new daily flight from Hong Kong to Hohhot. The flight departs Hohhot at 07:15, arriving Hong Kong at 10:45. The return flight departs Hong Kong at 11:30, arriving Hohhot at 15:00.

LIAONING

Shenyang to Start Metro Building

The local government of Shenyang confirmed a metro project, which will be started at the end of this year. The planned Shenyang subway lines will stretch a total of 22 km and costs nearly ¥9.48 billion (US \$1.15 billion). As the biggest city in Northeast China, Shenyang's long-awaited metro project has received warm welcome from the public.

GUIZHOU

McDonald's to Open Store in Guiyang

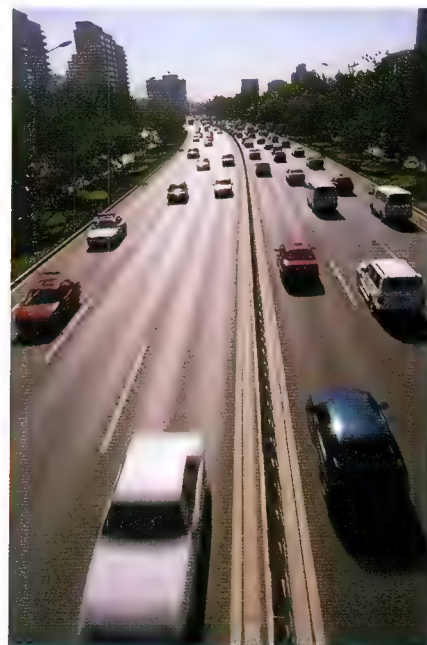
The US-based fast-food giant McDonald's is set to open its 681st Chinese branch in Guiyang of Guizhou in October. Situated at Fushuinan Road, Nanming District of the city, the restaurant will cover an area of 500 m² with 180 seats inside. In 1990, McDonald's opened its first Chinese branch in Shenzhen. By the end of June this year, the total number of McDonald's outlets in the country reached 680.



CHINA

Low Fares Airline Lands China

Air Chunqiu, China's first low fares airline, operated its first flights in July. The flights are from Shanghai to Yantai in Shandong, and Nanchang in Jiangxi, with a discounted fare of ¥199, which is about 30% of the full fare. The airline also operates flights from Shanghai to Mianyang in Sichuan, and Guilin in Guangxi.



BEIJING-TIANJIN

Beijing and Tianjin Build High-Speed Rail Link

The construction of Beijing-Tianjin high-speed rail link has started, and will be completed before June 2008 — just in time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The 115 km long railway costs an investment of ¥12.3 billion (US \$1.48 billion). Advanced technologies are being adopted to ensure safety, stability, and punctuality.



BEIJING

New Name for 30,000 Bus Stops

The 30,000 bus stops in Beijing will be given a new name. This project aims to rename the bus stops in a systemic way, according to local history and people's wishes. Some stops will be named after tourist spots.

MACAO

Macao Cheers for World Heritage Status

The Historic Centre of Macao has added to the United Nations World Heritage List. The centre stands witness to the successful East-West cultural pluralism, with the oldest, the most complete and consolidated array of European architectural legacy, standing intact on Chinese territory today.



HUNAN

Ancient Style Pedestrian Street Opens in Changsha

A 340 m long pedestrian street has opened in Changshan, Hunan's provincial city, after a year of construction. As a recreation of ancient China, the Ming-Qing style street features teahouses, antiques shops and archways. There are also several exhibitions halls and memorial columns.

YUNNAN

Expressway Shortened Travelling Time

Yunnan's Anchu Expressway, linking Anning and Chuxiong, had been opened. From now on, travelling from Kunming to Dali only takes four hours; and to Baoshan, the city in west Yunan, six hours. It is expected that the expressway can provide travellers a more comfortable journey.

SHAANXI-HENAN

New Train Connects Xi'an and Kaifeng

A direct train is now in service between Xi'an, Shaanxi, and Kaifeng, Henan. The train connects Luoyang and Zhengzhou; travelling in Henan is expected to be more convenient. The trains departing Xi'an and Keifeng at 11:01 and 10:10 respectively, and the journey takes less than nine hours.



GUANGDONG

Shenzhen Railway Station's Reconstruction Finished

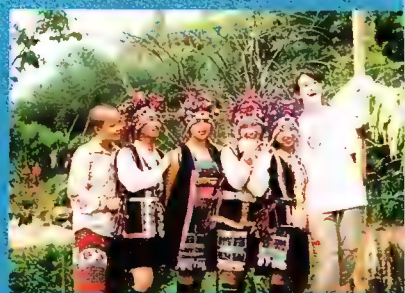
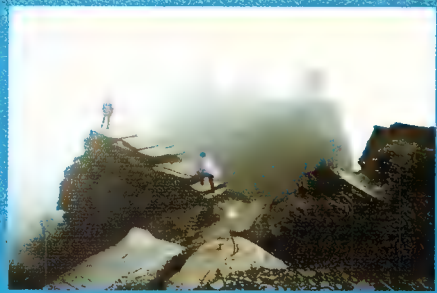
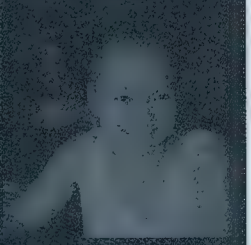
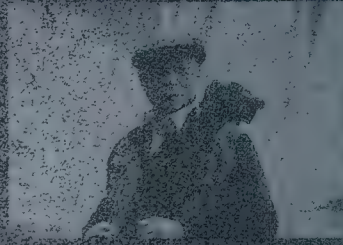
The reconstruction of Shenzhen Railway Station has completed. The new ticket office and departure hall, occupying an area of 2,000 m², is located at the south of the square, a site closer to the Long-Distance Bus Station and the Luohu Terminal, which connects to Hong Kong. There are also five ticket vendor machines selling express ticket to Guangzhou.

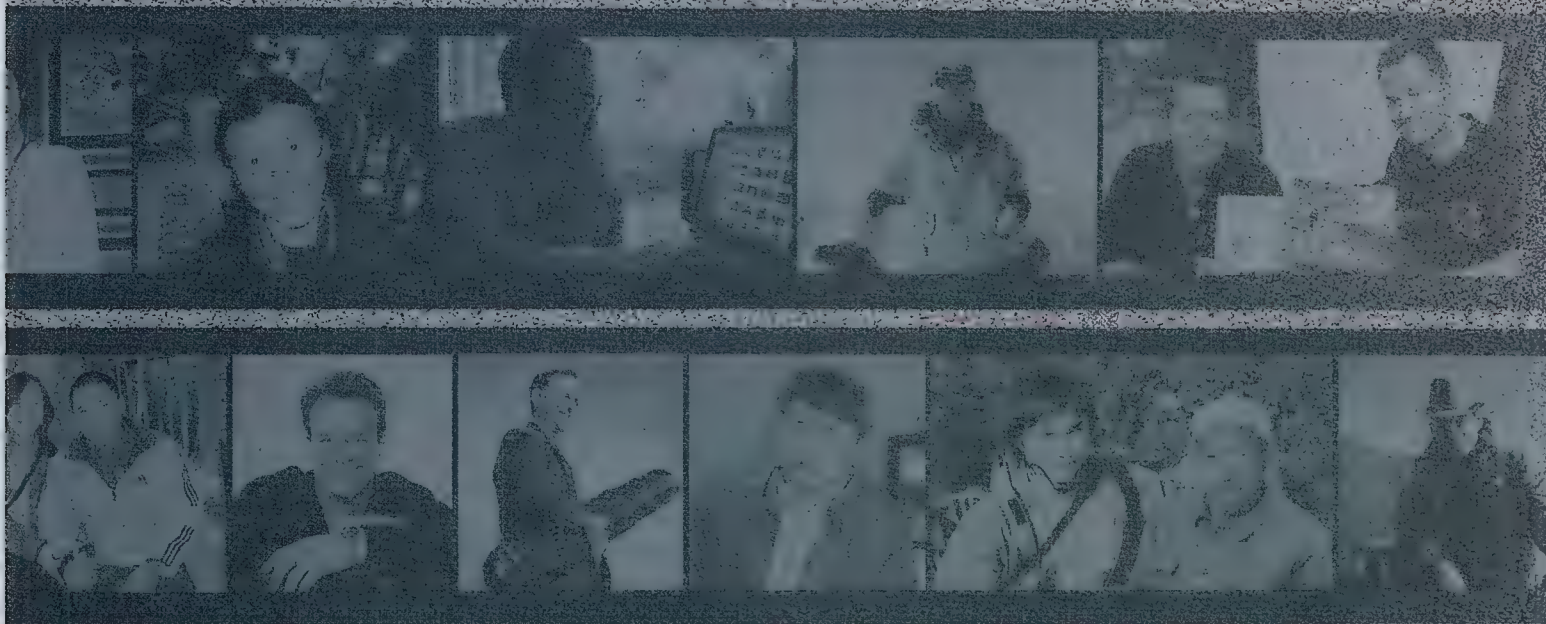


JIANGSU

Massacre Museum Adds 100 Memories

More than 100 copies of documents and photos from the time of the Nanjing Massacre have been added to the Memorial Hall in the city. The 21 photographs, 47 letters, the passport and Red Cross armband, owned by an American missionary Minnie Vautrin (1886-1941), have been loaned to the museum. The collection is donated by Minnie Vautrin's relative Cindy Vautrin.





25

Most Wanted Things to Do in China

Everyone has dreams, hopes and aspirations. People may not work toward the same purpose, but we all seek to leave our mark behind.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of our publication, we picked 25 people from all walks of life and had them to share about the things they wish to do in China. They include journalist, student, teacher, social worker, doctor, photographer, musician, TV producer, volunteer, and backpacker. Although their life experience and vision are significantly different from one another, they share the same devoted spirit to turn their dream into reality.



Travel and photography are like twins. Some people take photos on journey while others travel for photography. As for me, travel and photography are inseparable. Travel offers me a chance to experience the fun of returning to nature. My photographic style benefits from the charming mountains and natural landscape of China. Travel and photography together enrich my life and creation. I hope I can attract more tourists and inspire more passion for travel with my photographic works.



Tchen Fou-li

Nature's way to Rejuvenate



Over 40 years, I have travelled to Guilin and Huangshan Mountains for several times. I have also trudged along the Silk Road, explored Shuanbei Plateau, reached the snowfield in the east, arrived at Tibet in the west and returned to the hometown in the south. In the lifelong journey of photographic creation, I deeply feel that scenic photography is a career about beauty while the way to beauty is full of hardship. But I have neither complaint nor regret.

Exploring lonely villages and barren mountains gives me tremendous satisfaction. Moreover, I help develop new tourist resources for people. In recent years, landscape



Left: The waterfall of Jiuzhaigou in 1980

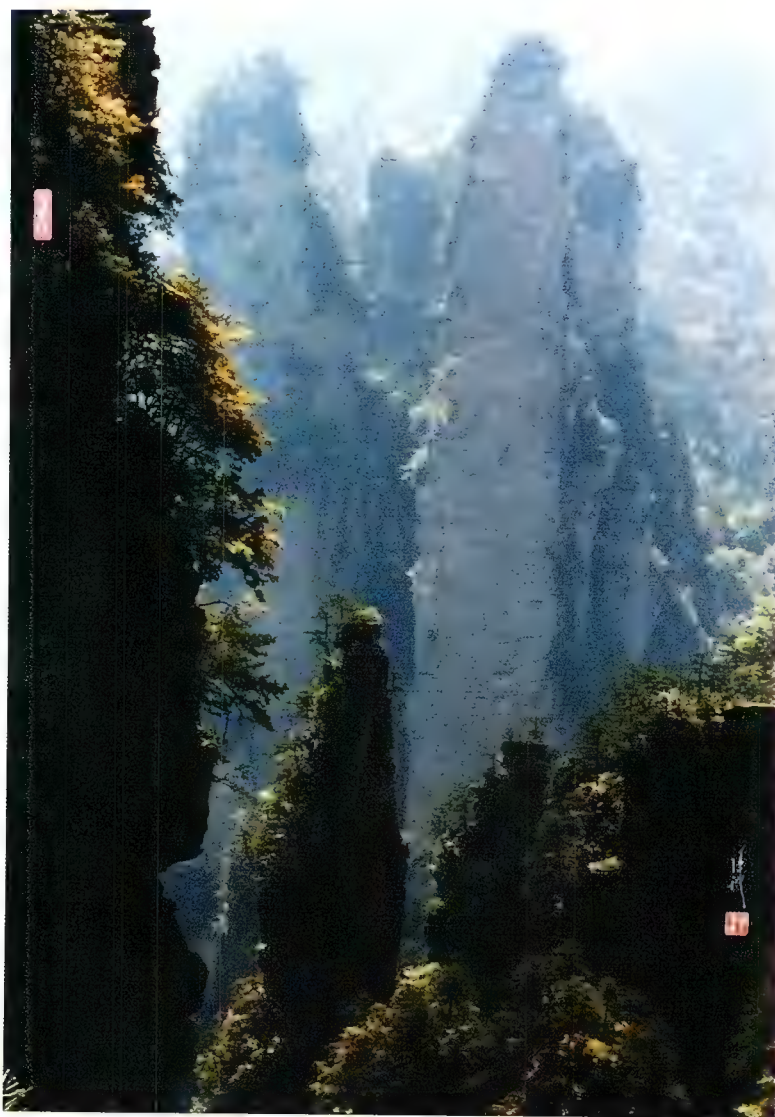
Right: The Three Gorges of Yangze River in 1994

I grew up in the eastern part of Guangdong (Chaozhou and Shantou) during my childhood and went abroad at the age of 19. I returned to China twice, my homeland parted for more than 20 years, by invitation in 1959 and 1962. The purposes were to make art in western Guilin and Huangshan Mountains separately. My tired spirit was comforted among the beautiful mountains and peaceful streams; my mind was filled with the poetic sentiments of Chinese painting. And I took a tumble at the very moment, for I found aspiration in the photographic world. My artistic style was transformed by Guilin and Huangshan Mountains. From then on, I started seeking a harmony between realism and romanticism in my works.

photographers have made a contribution to the development and flourishing of new sights in China. They have walked a new path and revealed a new world through their lens. I have also made many attempts in this field and am enormously gratified.

Jiuzhaigou and Qingyan Mountain

In the golden fall of 1980, I went to Jiuzhaigou, a new sight spot in the northwest of Sichuan. When my feet were on the land of Jiuzhai and Huanglong, I was immediately spellbound by such a wonderful fairy world. I published many photographic works on Jiuzhaigou in this magazine in March of 1981. I was pleased with



Top: Qingyan Mountain in Zhangjiajie Scenic Spot of Hunan ,1981

Right: Fanjing Mountain in Guizhou,1991

Left: Picnic at Fanjing Mountain,1991



the feedback from readers of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia countries.

I went to Qingyan Mountain with several friends once I heard about its legends by chance in April 1981. Seated in Western Hunan, Qingyan Mountain Sight Spot (current Zhangjiajie Scenic Spot) is a small basin surrounded by hills. We sought tourist interests among the mountains for six or seven days continuously. To wait for favourable weather, we had to crowd in a tea farmer's house for several days at the top of Huangshi Stockade Village. When the sun shone again after rain, we took a satisfactory shot at the end of our trip. The 12-page series devoted on Qingyan Mountain was published in the 18th issue of China Tourism. These pictures unveiled the quiet mountains to the world. By the summer of the same year, Qingyan Mountain was suffering from an overload of tourists. Therefore, Hunan Provincial Tourist Bureau granted me the title "Honorary Advisor".

I do not deserve some of the praises I received. However, it is true that I have stepped foot on almost every part of the nation since 1958. Joint Publishing Company Limited (HK) even published a large picture album for me, named "View of China". In the autumn of 1983, I held a photographic exhibition in Nanjing named Tchan Fou-li's Tour in Jiangsu. In the same year, Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House published a pictorial bearing the same name. They are the best rewards for my work. I have also been well received by local tourist authorities of Wuyi Mountains, Changbai Mountains, and Zhou Village, who are always generous about praising my works.






Living through Landscape Photography

Landscape Photography offers me a chance to appreciate the majestic nation and nature. It also allows me to observe social changes, taste life, and experience spiritual depth. Indeed, I am concerned with my fellow men, especially those who are at grass-root level. Many of them appeared in my picture albums, such as "View of China", "Track through Jiangsu" and "A Collection of

Photographic Works".

Moreover, I make friends with many zealous photographers from all walks of life, and this is one of the true joys in life.

People often say that photographers look younger than their age. I think it is because photographers keep on expanding their horizon by embracing nature. A person will never become old when he harbours a youthful spirit. 

Left: Zhangjiajie Tourism Exhibition held in Hong Kong in 2005 (by Chan Yat Nin)

Right: Conferred the "Honorary citizen" by the mayor of Zhangjiajie in 2005 (by Chan Yat Nin)

Tchan Fou-li's Profile

Mr. Tchan Fou-li is a world-renowned photographer. He has made great contribution in the history of Chinese photography for over half a century. He combines the elements of Chinese painting in his landscape photos. Mr. Tchan Fou-li has made a frequent tour to China since 1950s. His footmarks have spread over the country for the last several decades.

Mr. Tchan Fou-li has served as President of China Tourism (Hong Kong) ever since it began publication. His works were published in China Tourism and many periodicals frequently. His works attracted numerous tourists to some of China's lesser-known scenic spots, such as Zhangjiajie, Jiuzhaigou, and Fanjing Mountain, during its early phrase of tourism development. Therefore, he has been conferred with titles such as "Honorary Citizen" and "Honorary Advisor" by local tourist authorities.

Mr. Tchan Fou-li is also an enthusiastic social activist. He has held various social offices, including member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, vice chairman of China Photographers Association, etc.

The stone tablet of source of Yellow River



Spiritual Journey to the Source of River Zheng Yunfeng

Zheng Yunfeng has had many sentimental attachments to Yellow River and Yangtze River ever since his childhood. He dreamed to reach the source of the rivers that foster the entire Chinese Nation. In 1980, he departed for the source of the river lying on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. During his 20-year journey, he walked over snow mountains, grasslands, marshes and glaciers in all weather conditions. His childhood dream finally turned into reality as he completed his soul journey.

In 1980, Zheng Yunfeng, a photographer who served Xuzhou Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, made a very important decision. From then on, he would inspect the source of Yangtze River, Yellow River and Lancang River on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau from June to August each year. His job lasted for eight years.

Growing up by the Yellow River

Born in Xuzhou, Zheng is crazy about the source of three major rivers.

It is not easy to find the source of Yangtze River, Yellow River and Lancang River. The source lies on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau where the weather is horrendous. This is a serious challenge

The plants at source of the rivers



that requires sufficient funds, good physical strength and persistence. To prepare himself, Zheng Yunfeng ran for ten kilometres whenever he stayed in Xuzhou.

The Grandeur of Life

The source of three major rivers has an average altitude that exceeds 4,500 m. Its sceneries consist of glaciers, mountains, lakes, and rivers, namely Kunlun Mountains, Bayankala Mountains, Danggula Mountains, Zhaling Lake, Eling Lake, Maduo Lake, etc. Yangtze River, Yellow River and Lancang River rise among the plateau and develop into a rolling rivers from tiny streams.

"Tibetans only drink buttered tea and eat highland barley food twice a day. Pasturing is their routine work. Even little children can walk around butt-naked in severe winter. Most city dwellers are disgusted with cow dung, but it is as rare as air and water in this place; the people here used it as fuel for light and warmth."

Zheng Yunfeng experienced many life and death moments and he overcame endless obstacles in the days when he sought the source of three major rivers. He remained fearless, "Difficulties are to refine your characters and death is a natural step in life".

Zheng Yunfeng is forgetful when he shoots photos. His assistant estimated that Zheng had lost at least 200 pairs of glasses. The time he lost his glasses on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau was the most dangerous, because it might lead to snow blindness. A kind Tibetan gave his pair of glasses

The glacier at source of Yangtze River



to Zheng and merely covered his own eyes with white cloth. At another time, Zheng was busy taking photos for Tibetan children and failed to notice the impending mastiffs. The mastiffs thought he was attacking their little masters and bit his hands.

Great River Represents the Spirit of Life

Zheng Yunfeng believes that the Yellow River and Yangtze River represent the spirit and bearing of Great River.

Yellow River takes a source at Kariqu and Yueguliezong Basin in Bayankala Mountains. It flows to Maduo via Xingsu Sea, Zhaling Lake and Eling Lake and then continues its journey to the sea across Animaqing Mountains, Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Loess Plateau and North China Grand Plain. Yangtze River takes a source at Jianggendiru Glacier of Geladandong Serac, the main peak of Danggula Mountains. The rivulets gathering melt-waters of glaciers and cirques flow through snow mountains and basins into the East Sea.

Treasuring the Source of River

It was twenty years ago when he first took photos of the river sources. Zheng Yunfeng

Tibetan yak



Tibetan kids



Zheng's dream to reach the sources of Yellow River and Yangtze River finally comes true

witnessed all the human destructions on the rare heritages.

Global warming leads to a rise in temperature of Qinghai. Reduction of glaciers, lakes and marshes has become a major problem for the river source area. At the source of Yangtze River, the glaciers are melting by 57 ft each year and the lakes are reducing day by day. The source of Yellow River dried in some courses in 1996, 1997 and 2004 separately. Excessive pasturing leads to serious destruction of grassland and desertification. Zheng Yunfeng is filled with sorrows whenever those problems are mentioned. "People destroy nature and nature punishes people in return. Our destructive behavior leads to aridity of lake and grassland. We should say sorry to nature for we have broken the harmony between man and nature."



Zheng Yunfeng's Profile:

Zheng Yunfeng serves as a vice chairman of the National Photography Association of Jiangsu. He has taken more than 150,000 photos since 1970's. Among them, many works were awarded and dozens of works had been selected and collected in national and international photographic shows. Zheng Yunfeng has profound affection towards Yellow River and Yangtze River. He started taking pictures at Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in 1980's. When the main dam was built among Yangtze Gorges, he had lived in that area for 7 years since 1997, documenting the changes of inhabitants, historic sites, and environments. Zheng Yunfeng returned to the river sources and continued his original shooting work in 2004. His representative works include "Eternal Three Gorges", "Keeping Watch at Three Gorges", "Tang-Tubo Ancient Road", etc.

Yang making a movie in Turkey



"Stories From Afar", a documentary broadcasted in Hong Kong in 1997, became the hottest talk of the year. It is a documentary on the life of the overseas Chinese who are scattered in almost every corner of the world.

The programme won public's praise and, at the same time, tears. The production crew believes that "where there are people, there are Chinese and stories about them."

Yang Yongxiang

Chinese Innovative Documentary Producer

Yang Yongxiang, the producer of "Stories From Afar", graduated from the Department of Politics and Administration of Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1984. During the 1980s, China began opening up herself to the world; similar to his friends, Yang's interest was mainly in Chinese politics and he eventually

worked in the broadcasting industry after graduation.

Inspiration from an Economic Talk

His work "Stories From Afar" took his career to a peak in 1998. It was more than a TV

programme for it became the research interest of the academy.

Such huge success was inspired by an economist. "Once I attended a talk hosted by an American Chinese economist," Yang said. "He said that many European scholars had already predicted China would become a super economic power in the 21st century about 50 years ago. Hence, Chinese would be seen everywhere in the world. As a matter of fact, Chinese can be found even in the most remote and poor places in India, and this demonstrates the big influence of Chinese worldwide."

An idea came to his mind, "If Chinese people are found everywhere in the world, even in war-stricken countries, there must be numerous stories about them."

Sweet Stories from Afar

Seeking overseas Chinese was extremely hard at the beginning. "We had no idea where to begin," he said. "We tried to contact the Red Cross and World Vision, but they are of little help. The information we had at the beginning was limited, but the Chinese embassies proved to be very helpful. After the series was shown and became

Travelling on China during the 1980's



well-known, filming in very sensitive places even became possible."

"The story of Chinese leaving their homeland is not necessarily a miserable one. Some stories have a happy ending. One of them is about a young Hong Kong girl who married an Israel man. Being the daughter of a wealthy merchant who was used to material comfort, the girl started her new life from scratch. Nonetheless, with the assistance from the local government, she single-handedly cultivated her farm in the desert. Her produces are now doing so well that some are even being sold even to the U.K."

"Indeed," Yang admitted, "the series has expanded my horizon and deepened my thoughts. Chinese people have a deep-seated emotional attachment towards their homeland, even when they live a happy life in another foreign country. In the later parts of the series, we found some Chinese who returned to China with fame and fortune. Some of them even sent their children back to China to study."

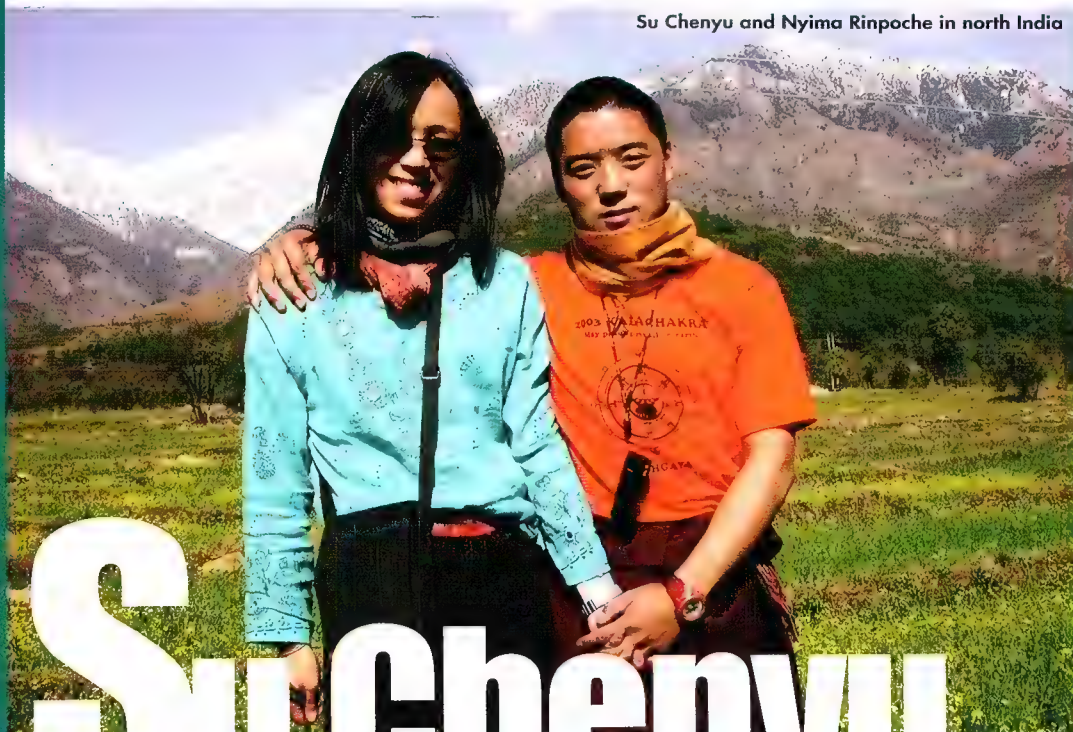
Yang is the producer of the documentary "Story From Afar". Grown up in the 1980's, he has an interest in Chinese politics, which later becomes the inspiration of his production. Yang has set up his own film making company and is currently working on a several documentaries. His new film is "The Days of Noah".

Left: Making a documentary at Lop Nur in Xinjiang

Right: Having an interview



Su Chenyu and Nyima Rinpoche in north India



Su Chenyu

Falling in Love with a Living Buddha



Many of us may feel that life is a repetition. Can one ever imagine his or her life being changed by a trip? The following is a travel and love story of Taiwanese girl and a Tririnpoche (abbot) of a Sakya Sect monastery in Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan.



Top Left: Chenyu and Nyima

Top Right: Chenyu in India

The Land of Enlightenment

In December 2002, Su Chenyu, a Taiwanese journalist and a believer of Tibetan Buddhism, travelled to Budh-Gaya, the Holy Land where Sakyamuni attained Buddhahood, to fulfill her long-awaited dream.

The journey was, however, a physically demanding one for a girl. Chenyu had a fever but she insisted to continue her journey to get to an assembly in Lumbini, a town between India and Nepal. On her way, her sickness grew worse. Standing alone on the street full of Tibetan-speaking people, she felt completely hopeless. At this moment, a guy speaking Mandarin approached her. He is Nyima — the person who changed Chenyu's life.

Nyima is the Tririnpoche of the Palden Ningye Choekhorling Monastery in Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, and he went to India for Buddhist studies. They started talking in Mandarin, which really comforted Chenyu. Knowing that she was ill, Nyima kindly carried her backpack, and asked other passengers in Tibetan to give her a window seat.

Opposite Attracts

It took three days for the bus to reach Lumbini. Nyima was not on the same bus with Chenyu, but he asked a monk on the bus to take care of her. After the assembly, they went to Katmandu together. On their way, love had grown in their hearts.

However, Buddhist monks cannot be

married, so Nyima had to face a tough choice. Returning to secular life is considered shameful according to Tibetan tradition. Indeed, when the lovers travelled together in India, they met some monks who mocked them. Moreover, there was hostility from both families and friends. Chenyu's friends in Taiwan thought that Nyima wanted to marry Chenyu for her money and visa; while Nyima's friends suspected that Chenyu fell for Nyima's title. Yet, the biggest problem was Nyima's mother, who always wanted her son to be a monk.

Living Buddha's Wife in Prophecy

But none of these would stop the lovers who believe in their predestined love. When Nyima was around 15, he started to dream about a strange girl repeatedly. The girl in his dream would tell him that she had been waiting for him for a long time. Nyima went to ask a reverent Arhat, and learnt that he was the reincarnation of a late Tririnpoche from the Palden Ningye Choekhorling Monastery, and the girl in his dream would be his wife. The late Tririnpoche even wrote down the girl's name, and asked Nyima to go to India, where he would meet the girl. Chenyu's Buddhist name, Kunsang Wangmo, was the name that the late Tririnpoche






predicted!

Magical Sweets and Green Tea

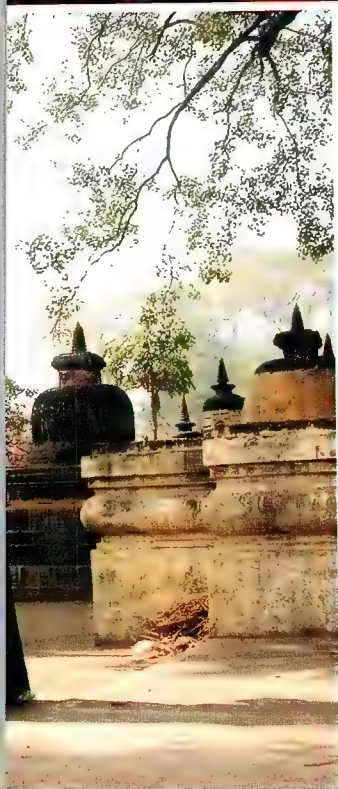
Leaving India, Chenyu and Nyima got back to their home. After some serious consideration, Nyima told his mother about Chenyu and his plan to return to secular life. It took a month for his family to accept the possibility that his son would marry a Taiwanese girl.

However, it was a pack of candies and some green tea that eventually won the heart of Nyima's mother. When the carton that was prepared by Chenyu arrived from Taiwan, Nyima's family was harvesting the highland barley. Looking at the candy, his mother smiled happily. The Taiwan green tea even became their favourite drink. In February 2004, Chenyu flew to Sichuan to meet Nyima's family and they got along well.

"I hope it wouldn't take too much time and energy to apply for the visa to the Mainland. Because of the Taiwan government's restrictive policies, I have to fly back to Taiwan alone to go through the long application procedures even when we are married." Chenyu said. 

Su Chenyu's Profile

A Taiwanese travel journalist and a Tibetan Buddhist, Su Chenyu has been to India, New York, the Philippines, Nepal, Korea, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Pelew Islands, the Bali Island in Indonesia, China's mainland, the Pamirs Plateau, etc.



Bottom Left: Budh-Gaya, the Holy Land where Sakyamuni attained Buddhahood
Bottom Right: Visited the ruins of Nalanda in India

Gai Mingsheng is young at heart. Undeterred despite disability, he went deep into Yunnan Northwest Plateau with a walking stick to collect pieces of history together. He ended up visiting local minority families for a few years before he finally found the origin and development of these nationalities.



Dulong people, a minority group with tattoo-face in Yunnan

Gai Mingsheng Recording History

The Only One Who Stayed

Ten years ago, I organised the Lugu Lake Photographer Group with a friend and Gai was among the 40 applicants. I was surprised by his physical state when we met in Chengdu. He had metal sheets to protect his injured waist and wore a neck protector. His two camera cases were equally heavy.

Gai once fell off from a cliff when he took pictures by the west coast of the Black Sea in Russia. His lumbar vertebrae and cervical vertebrae were seriously injured. He couldn't stand for half a year, and he needed to go through an operation that would either leave him completely cured or paralysed for life.

That time, we all came back with fruitful gains from Lugu Lake after five days except Gai. He stayed there alone for 60 days.

Attracted by the Culture

I met Gai in Shenzhen before long and was surprised to see that his protectors are gone. Yet he told me that he didn't receive any operation. He said that he was too fascinated by Lugu Lake and forgot his way home. Moreover, the Yongning Spring there miraculously healed his injury.

We chatted for two whole days in Shenzhen. I was drawn to his pictures, his experience in Mosuo, the cremation rites of Mosuo people, and the culture in this isolated place.

During his stay in Lugu Lake, Gai was determined to take photos for 100 Mosuo

families. Therefore, he went there year by year. Finally, he understood that he was infatuated with the unique culture of Mosuo people, whose ancestors are Naxi people.

The Secret to Joy

Naxi people was a branch of ancient Qiang people. They came to their current habitat along Min River to avoid the disaster of war. The route of migration becomes the collective memory of Naxi people. Naxi people believe that the soul would trace back the migration route to return to the place of origin when a person passes away.

Gai began to trace such path on August 1997. During investigation, he related to the natural phenomena in Gongga Mountains to the description "speaking stones and walking woods" in the Dongbajing Scripture, a Naxi classic. As a result, he speculated that the Naxi people originally lived in the Gongga Mountains of Sichuan. His finding could give new clues to anthropologists.

"I'm not ambitious enough to carry out a complex research project. The reason I spent four years looking for the former residences of Naxi people is to witness the history of this ancient tribe. Hopefully my field investigation can yield data for the real experts."

In 2003, he started another photography project on Dulong people, a minority group with the least population in China. Gai went deeply into the mountains of Yunnan in the reaches of



Right: Mosuo people at Lugu Lake of Sichuan

Left: He was infatuated with the unique culture of minority groups and went there to shoot year by year



Dulong River and lived for more than half a year.

He found 40 tattoo-faced old men and made a profile for each of them. But despite the effort of interpreters, Gai had difficulties conducting the interview. The same person would talk about conflicting stories in different times, so he had to make careful verification one by one.

The Sense of Responsibility

Gai is accustomed to the hardship of

travelling. Instead, he often suffers from sickness when he returns to his home in Dalian, Liaoning. Now he gets one more excuse to travel.

Gai plans to record the stories of over 4,000 Dulong tattoo-faced old men in Dulong River. He has a sense of responsibility to gather their oral history. Gai also would continue taking pictures every year for the Mosuo people. He wants to do some follow-up shots and observe the changes.

Gai Mingsheng's Profile

Born in Dalian, Liaoning, in 1949's, Gai graduated from Liaoning Artistic Normal School. He taught fine arts in a middle school and worked as the vice chairman and secretary-general of Dalian Municipal Photographer Association. He published a lot of works and held his personal photographic show. In 2002, Mosuo Cultural Museum established a new division to collect Gai's work on Mosuo people.

Left: Locals cross the river by sheepskin bag

Middle: Taking family photo of Mosuo people at Lijiazui village of Sichuan

Right: From Yunnan to Sichuan through Lugu Lake



Crosstalk performance



Dashan Crosstalk Show Star

Dashan, once a student in China, is now a crosstalk star speaking Mandarin with a Beijing accent. Teaching Chinese to foreigners on TV, performing drama as well as featuring some soap operas in the past decade, he considers himself a cultural ambassador between the east and west.

Dashan's crosstalk debut was on CCTV's New Year Gala in 1989, when he was still a nameless Canadian student in Beijing. After 16 years, this young man with blond hair and white skin, not only takes part in crosstalk shows and plays, but also teaches Chinese to foreigners at the present. Last year he even received the Ten Outstanding Youth in Beijing Award.

Walking on the street, Dashan is always

followed by a crowd of people asking him for signature. Even when he took his son to ski in a small town in Canada, he would meet someone who knew him.

The Foreign Star

"My first crosstalk performance was done on behalf of Peking University's foreign students.

People used to think that foreigners could only speak Chinese with a strong accent. So when they heard that I could master the colloquial dialect, especially in crosstalk, they were most impressed." Dashan's performance at that time was not perfect, but was warmly welcomed. Later, he learnt crosstalk with Jiang Kun, a master of the art. By 1991, he had already mastered many old crosstalk pieces.

Crosstalk show has made Dashan a star. However, some people would criticise his performance as a monkey show. Dashan explains patiently, "Comedy, to a certain degree, is about making fun of oneself. I have

never tried to deface any foreigners, but I would like to surprise the audiences with an image of foreigner who is even more Chinese than the common Chinese themselves. I think it is a cultural phenomenon that I am accepted by the Chinese public."

Foreigner Teaching Chinese

After his graduation from Peking University, Dashan worked in the Canadian Embassy in Beijing for two years before setting up Dashan Inc. Apart from crosstalk, he is also active in broadcasting and publishing. He teaches foreigners Chinese and Chinese English, which he considers as his mission. "Some people believe that cultural clashes between the East and the West are inevitable, but I think both cultures can be complementary. The biggest problem is the language barrier."

Outstanding Youth of Beijing

Does Dashan have an identity crisis? "I just follow my own way," he said, "and have never thought too much about my identity."



What Is Crosstalk?

As a kind of folk art, crosstalk or comic dialogue has a history of almost 100 years. The performance is a social satire full of jokes, jocular conversation, in forms of dialogues and song. Performer needs to speak in a clear and loud in a sprightly and lively style. Tongue twister is one of the basic skills. Then they must be able to speak different dialects. Singing and imitating are also required.

Left: Act as Italian painter Lang Shining (Giuseppe Castiglione) in teleplay

Right: A series of "Uncle Dashan" children's bilingual books is now available across China



Last year, Dashan was the first foreigner received the award of Ten Outstanding Youth of Beijing. He said earnestly, "Compared to a comedian star, being an outstanding youth is a harder job. I hope I could spend more time on voluntary work. Such an honour is indeed a recognition of what I have contributed to the society."

After receiving the award, he is appointed to be the spokesperson for the cancer educational programme jointly run by China and Canada; and he also appears in the advertisement filmed by Canadian Ministry of Environment and the State Environmental Protection Administration of China. All these works mean that Dashan has long become an old friend of China.

The Love for Chinese Culture

Dashan is fascinated by the magnanimous culture of Beijing: "There has not been much indigenous Beijing culture. For instance, the roast

duck is a Shandong dish, the hot pot is from Inner Mongolia, and Peking Opera is from Anhui."

"Crosstalk is my hobby and quest, not just a career. I always want to do more. At first I only tried to imitate others, now I'm thinking to make it more personal. I will talk about my own life, wanting to bring together Chinese and Western culture."

Dashan came to China because he was curious and desired to know a new world. Later I learned that his grandparents came to Beijing and Henan in the 1920's working as doctors. They even had the thought of settling down in China. Later they left after losing two children here. Even if he had not come to China 16 years ago, I have no doubt that his emotional attachment towards China would surface sooner or later.

Compared to his lively performance on stage, the real Dashan is quiet and reserved. He loves his family, hoping that his wife and child can live a common life, a life without reporters and cameras.

Right: Having an interview with Hong Kong China Tourism Press

Left: Serve as a master of a TV entertainment



Be Aware of Copycat

According to Dashan's personal website (www.dashan.com), there is an increasing numbers of foreigner who claimed to be "Xiaoshan" (meaning "little mountain") or "Dashan the second" in recent years. They also have their names begin with Da, such as Dahai ("big sea"), Daxiong ("big bear"), Daniu ("big cow").

Dashan's Profile

Born in Canada, Dashan (meaning "big mountain"), or Mark Rowswell, first came to China as a student. He made his debut at the 1989 New Year Gala on CCTV, and began his career as the first foreign crosstalk star. Over the past 16 years, he has been engaged in cultural exchange activities between China and the western world.

Photo & Article by Linda



Charmed by Ancient Music John Thompson

John Thompson, who came to know the ancient Chinese musical instrument Guqin by chance, has been learning, researching and promoting this 3,000-year-old music. He travelled to the places related to Guqin and even moved his family from New York to Hong Kong, where he could get to China easier. Mt. Jiuyi in Hunan, the place inspired some ancient Guqin songs, is John's next destination.

During his research, John has been to many places. He believes that such an investigation and personal experience is very important to further his understanding of the origins this ancient art. By travelling around, he can also appreciate the aesthetic of both Guqin and the landscape, which he believes can help refining his musical skills and taste.

Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, Mt. Jiuyi is the place where the ancient Emperor Shun died. When his two wives Ehuang and Nuying rushed here for the funeral, they cried day and night that their tears moistened the bamboos nearby. They later jumped into the Xiangjiang River and ended their life. The bamboo there thus is given the romantic name of tear-bamboo.



Left: Mt. Jiuyi located in Ningyuan county in southern Hunan and close to the border between Guangdong and Guangxi

Right: John and his Guqin (an ancient Chinese musical instrument)

What Is Guqin?

Guqin (a seven-stringed plucked instrument similar to the zither), originally known as "qin," is one of the oldest Chinese stringed instruments still in use today. The character "gu", meaning "old", was added to differentiate it from other kinds of "qin" (the character later became a general name for certain musical instruments). Guqin used to have only five strings, which were added to seven in the Zhou Dynasty (1046 - 256 B.C.). In ancient China, a scholar was expected to master four arts: music, chess, calligraphy and painting.

The art of Guqin is the second Chinese art (after Kunqu Opera) being listed in the UNESCO in 2003 as one of the 28 masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage.

Years ago, John went to Hunan with a dream of visiting Mt. Jiuyi, but he was led by the tourist authorities to places like the former residence of Chairman Mao. He was disappointed that people overlooked wonderful resources like Mt. Jiuyi.

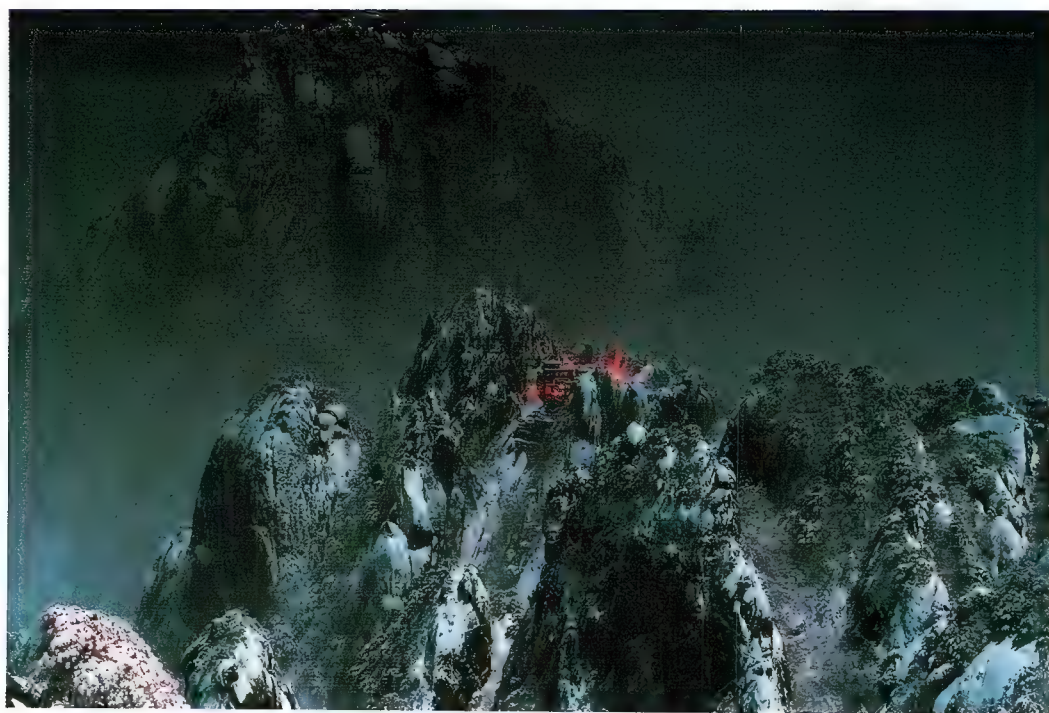
Located in Ningyuan County in southern Hunan and close to the border between

Mt. Jiuyi: The Birth Place of Guqin

For John, Emperor Shun is not only a successful leader with moral integrity, but also an outstanding Guqin musician. "Nanfeng Qu", a song composed by Emperor Shun, celebrates all the good deeds and charities. Quite a few of the Guqin music pieces are related to the legends from

Top: John and his friends playing Guqin in a sea of pine tree on Mt. Huangshan under the moonlight in 2002

Below: The ancient Guqintai in Wuhan, Hubei

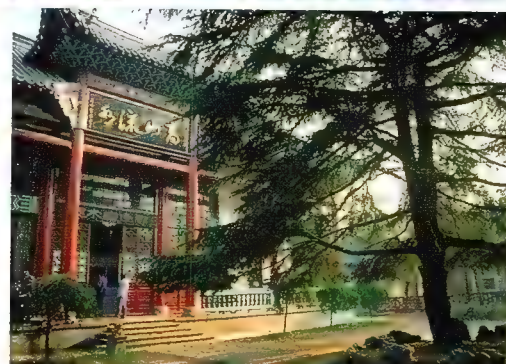


Mt. Jiuyi, among which, "Xiangfei Yuan" and "Xiang Furen" tells the stories of Emperor Shun's wives. "Xiao Xiang Shuiyun", composed in South Song Dynasty (1127-1279), laments the perishing kingdom.

John's love for Guqin comes from his love for Chinese culture. Born in the U.S., he studied western music in university and came to know Guqin when he served as a civil official in the army in Vietnam in the 1960's. After retiring from the army, he returned to university and received a master degree on Asian Cultural Studies. Enlightened by a work on Guqin written by the German sinologist R. H. van Gulik, John became fond of this 3,000-year-old musical instrument. In 1974, he went to Taiwan to study Guqin. Two years later he moved to Hong Kong, learning Guqin and at the same time doing research. He was the Artistic Consultant of the Hong Kong Festival of Asian Arts until it came to an end in 1998. He also hosted programmes for Hong Kong radio stations to introduce Asian arts.

Four years ago, John moved back to New York and started a Guqin organisation that teaches and promotes Guqin music. He still gets back to Asia occasionally to attended conference.

"When I settled down in Hong Kong in 1976, it was the time when China was opening itself to the world. It is easier to collect materials for Guqin studies," John said.



The Sound of Music on Mt. Huangshan

Since then, John often travels with his Guqin in China, mostly to Jiangsu and Zhejiang. As Guqin used to be popular in these areas, there are still many Guqin musicians in Hangzhou, Suzhou, Changzhou, Nanjing and Shaoxing. In autumn of 2002, after attending a meeting in Suzhou, John travelled to Mt. Huangshan.

John Thompson was in high spirits when talking about this trip. "It is a great pleasure in life and a rare chance to play Guqin with friends in such a beautiful place. In our first day, we met some tourists who are also very interested in Guqin music. When the eight of us walked to a quiet place on the mountain, the wind suddenly sprang up and the rain followed. We ran hurriedly to take a shelter in a pavilion nearby and we found a huge bronze bell, just big enough to provide the shelter for the eight of us. As it was boring to

stand there, a friend played the Guqin and all of us followed.

"I also had an unforgettable Mid-Autumn Festival there. At about 4 A.M., two of us took our Guqins and walked into a sea of pine tree on the mountain under the moonlight. My friend recorded the scene with his digital DV camera, so that we can enjoy this wonderful moment again and again."

Learning from Ancient Musicians

Besides southeast China, John also travelled to Qufu, Shandong, the hometown of Confucius, and the Ancient Guqin Platform in Wuhan, Hubei. The later is the place where the great musician Yu Boya in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 746 B.C.) broke his Guqin because the death of his friend Zhong Ziqi, who was the only person who understood his music.

John thinks that both Confucius and Yu Boya are outstanding figures in the history of Guqin music. People usually take Confucius as an educator and philosopher, but he was, in fact, also an accomplished Guqin player. Confucius paid great attention to the social and educational functions of music, as mentioned in his works.

The story of Yu Boya and Zhong Ziqi is more famous. When Yu Boya played the melody "Guoshan Liushui" (known as "Lofty Mountains and Flowing Rivers"), Zhong Ziqi, who happened to hear it, felt exactly what Boya felt. They began a long discussion of the melody, sharing their love for Guqin. After the death of Ziqi, Boya played a melody in front of his tomb, then smashed the Guqin on the ground, and never played it again anymore.

In 1977, when the US launched Voyager1 space shuttle into the outer space, it carried a 90-minute music recording of all the countries in the

world, including the ancient Guqin classical melody "Guoshan Liushui".

John is fascinated by legends on Boya. According to history, Yu Boya followed his Guqin teacher Cheng Lian for three years but had little progress. His teacher asked him to go to an isolated island in the East Sea to find a Guqin master. Yet, Boya found no one on the island, and therefore, could only live there alone. He composed many melodies there when contemplating about life in this bleak island, and he finally realised what his teacher wanted him to learn — all forms of art required a relaxed and neutral state of mind. This inspiring story makes John believe that he must visit all relevant spots in China to feel the art of Guqin.

Apart from Mt. Jiuyi, Mt. Songshan and Mt. Wudang are John's dream as well, since these renowned mountains also have the profound culture of Guqin. "Of course, it would be ideal if I could travel with a good friend who appreciates Guqin, like Baoya and Ziqi. Finding such a person is difficult, perhaps I will meet one by chance?"



All forms of art required a relaxed and neutral state of mind

An American who first came to know Oriental culture in the 1960's, John studied Guqin in the 1970's and moved to Hong Kong. He was the editor and consultant of the Hong Kong Festival of Asian Arts, and the host for Hong Kong radio programmes. John is now living in New York with his wife.

Personal Website: www.silkqin.com

Peter Pang

Peter Pang spent most of his long holidays on helping these child patients



Wide Smiles!

Many poor children in the Mainland who suffer from harelip and cleft palate do not get treated, and they need to cope with the congenital facial deformity for the rest of their lives. The international aid agency of Operation Smile China program has organised volunteer medical workers to perform operations for poor children in remote and underdeveloped areas in China. Plastic surgeon Peter Pang is one of the voluntary doctors. He has spent most of his long holidays on helping these child patients. He hopes to help promote volunteer service to benefit more patients.

An operation of merely 45 minutes will transform these facial deformities, but many patients in China cannot be treated because they cannot afford the operation fee of 5,000 Hong Kong dollars.

Harelip or cleft palate occurs in every 550 newborns in the Mainland. People with this deficiency cannot eat or speak normally, and they often become the target of discrimination.

Helping People One at a Time

It happened almost six years ago, but Peter cannot forget the experience of being a voluntary doctor in Nanjing.

"It was biting cold then; many parents wrapped their child in cotton quilts and slept overnight outside the hospital in the open air, waiting to be selected for operation. Yet the quota was limited and over 700 kids were turned down. These parents were all in tears." After expending all their savings, these parents came to Nanjing from their far away hometown, in the hope of a cure. Yet the limited resources of the medical team could hardly satisfy so

many patients, even if the doctors wanted to.

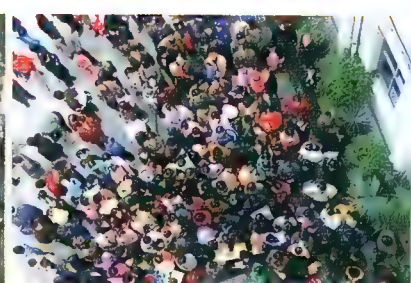
"Yes, there are many people waiting for the treatment, but we couldn't treat them all. We could only cure some of the patients. Still, those who received help will be benefited for life, and every operation is valuable."

Of course, donations and the participation of medical workers are essential for the programme, for each operation would take around ¥600,000 to 1,000,000.

"In the past, Operation Smile China was participated by foreign and Hong Kong medical workers only. In the last four years, there were also participants from Beijing and Shanghai, a proof that the volunteer spirit has spread to the medical circles in the Mainland." Mainland doctors can also watch how these medical experts operate. This is very helpful for improving their professional skills and these influences are immeasurable.

Professional Operations

There were altogether 40 people in the medical team, including plastic surgeons, anesthetists,



Left: Operation

Middle: The younger brother said that he would rather pass the chance of operation to his elder brother

Right: Many parents brought their child outside the hospital, waiting to be selected for operation

A plastic surgeon, Peter Pang joined the medical team of Operation Smile China to Nanjing in October 1999 for the first time. After that he also performed plastic surgery for children suffering from harelip and cleft palate in Qingdao, Kunming, Lanzhou, Dujiangyan, Zhongshan and Xi'an.

Operation Smile China Medical Mission

Tel: (852) 2827 8044

Website: www.operationsmile.org

paediatricians, nurses, dentists and speech therapists. The trip usually takes 10 days. After their arrival, they would work in two groups the next day: one group selecting the patients, and the other setting up the operation room. Surgeries are given from the fourth to the eighth day, and the ninth day is for packing and getting ready to leave.

The medical equipment on the Mainland is different from that in Hong Kong, but to reduce the amount of luggage and, all the appliance for the surgery, except the apparatus for anaesthesia, are provided by the local hospitals. Peter admitted that they had to adapt to the circumstances in each trip and must finish the surgery even if there were only simple and crude facilities available.

During the operation days, Peter would get up at five in the morning, and perform surgery from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Within the limited time they would seize every second, operating professionally and efficiently.

Brotherly Love

Peter said, "Although the child patients are poor

and want very much to receive the surgery, they are willing to sacrifice for their loved ones."

"Once, two brothers came to seek medical aid, the elder one was 13, and the younger one, 11. After selection, only the younger one met the requirement for operation, and the elder brother was rejected because he was above 12. Everyone was moved when the younger brother said that he would rather pass the chance to his elder brother."

"He told us that he wanted his elder brother to be cured because he had to work and deal with many people. Given such limited resources, no second chance is guaranteed. Can you believe how mature the young children can be?"

Peter said earnestly, "I'm really fortunate, because not every doctor has a chance to perform this type of voluntary work. For instance, the doctors in the radiotherapy department and the internal medicine department are not eligible for surgery."

"I hope I could encourage more students from Hong Kong to participate in the medical team. Together we can help thousands of patients suffering from harelip and cleft palate."



School for Everyone

Eva Chan



To help extend education to the poor children in Mainland, Eva Chan and Choi Ziuming founded the Sowers Action 13 years ago. Eva practiced what she had advocated earnestly by giving up her work and devoting herself to the program affairs. She dreamed to fulfill a simple but important mission: sending every child to school.

Sowers Action creates a miracle in the charitable circle in Hong Kong. Much of its success should be owed to the huge volunteer team.

"Because Sowers trusts volunteers to carry out the programme in their own ways, they are empowered and satisfied. Surely, Sowers will do everything possible to support their work."

Sowers's competent management is the key to success. It wins complete confidence and long-term support of both donors and volunteers. Sowers will first assign its volunteers to investigate the possible sites to build school. Once confirm, it will remit donations via the volunteering team. Donors or other volunteers may join the team to visit newly built school in addition to monitor the distribution and use of donations. Moreover, all donations will be used for grant-in-aid rather than administrative funds unless otherwise specified.

Raising Awareness

Sowers have raised public awareness about the value of literacy through a series of programmes. All these activities aim to strengthen interaction and cooperation between Mainland and Hong

Kong.

"Charity without good policies will be fruitless. I will never help those who refuse to help themselves. Only those who are willing to work hard to improve their status quo deserve the delivery of resources." Sowers will need the school to raise part of the funding on its own when building a new school.

"At the very beginning, some reluctant officials were only forced to cooperate with us under the pressure of administration. But when they saw the benefit of education, they actually started to learn from us. Their changed attitude repaid our hardship and affirmed our direction. Besides the direct influence on partners, the fundraising teams sow the seeds of public interest here and there.

Take "The Long March for Education" for instance. It took 10 months for walkers to complete the whole course. They left their footmarks on many provinces, such as Jiangxi, Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan and Gansu. They had to cross mountains that are as high as 4,000 metres and endure many arduous journeys. But they touched the heartstring of numerous people in all the villages, towns and cities they visited.

Eva is gratified with the growth of Sowers,



Her dream is to educate every child



Raised public awareness about the value of literacy

As a founder of "Sowers Action", Eva has devoted herself to the society since the establishment of 1992. She turned herself from a volunteer into a full-time employee. In 2002, Eva was nominated as one of the top 10 Outstanding Youths of Hong Kong. Sowers Action undertook a series of large fundraising activities, including "Walk to Guangzhou", "Walk to Beijing", "The Long March for Education" etc.

yet she also has her share of worries. "Though we had worked hard to raise public interest, our organization has only limited capabilities. The key problem lies in government policies."

Repaying the Society

In 2000, she left Sowers and studied a master's degree on rural development in United Kingdom. She spent her time rethinking future direction and learning from other international non-profit organizations. Finally, she realised that she had to seek policy change in local government. "I need to equip myself as a competent leader who possesses abundant frontline experience, and at the same time familiarises with local state of affairs. In the past, I mainly made contact with the leaders at the county level. In the future, I hope I can communicate effectively with leaders at municipal, provincial and central levels. To ensure efficient delivery of resources, I need to keep an eye on the national policy and local development. In addition, I will also continue to promote Sowers in the Mainland and recruit more volunteers."

Eva works from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. She devotes her weekends to various meetings and

promotions, and she usually visit her partners in the Mainland during long holiday.

Does Sowers worth her time and talent?

"When I was nominated for "Outstanding Youth", a judge once asked me why I had chose to stay with Sowers when my two master degrees could have gotten me better rewarded financially in other industries."

"To me, money means nothing more than paying for a basic need of living. The value of people lie in their contribution to the society rather than the fortune they possessed. Each of us uses up many resources of the society, but few of us think of a way to repay the society."

Eva wishes Sowers to become an international non-governmental organization (NGO). "There is no NGO established by Chinese yet. I hope that China would eventually become developed enough to help other more unfortunate nations. I also aim of internationalizing Sowers."

Sowers Action Org:
(852) 2597 4739
www.sowers.org.hk

Achievements of Sowers

By 2004, Sowers Action had raised a sum of 170 million yuan, built 526 schools, and reached over 190,000 children from the 127 counties in 12 provinces. In addition, they established offices in Guangzhou and Yunnan, employing a total of 10 workers.

Starts her trip from Xining



Wan Wenjuan Travelling afar by Bike

Born in Hong Kong, Wan Wenjuan has enjoyed roaming about since her childhood. She went to Beijing alone to study in Beijing University of Physical Education. The year she graduated she took her first trip to Tibet. After that, she became a teacher in Hong Kong, and she backpacked whenever she had a chance to. Her fascination with travelling by bike began with her trip to Xinjiang and Tibet in 2002.

The Challenge of Xinjiang-Tibet Highway

"Tibet is the place I have always longed to go. I was deeply impressed by my trip to Tibet through the Qinghai-Tibet and Sichuan-Tibet Road in 1998 and 2002, so I had the idea of trying

each of the four routes to Tibet."

She chose the Xinjiang-Tibet Road — 4,500 m above sea level — for her first expedition. Her group of 11 people set off from Kashi in Xinjiang, heading for Lhasa and Mt. Everest. Unfortunately her teammates went into hospital one after another because of injury, coldness and mountain sickness. It was a great pity that these teammates had to give up, and only a few of them, including Wan Wenjuan, persisted in the journey.

Wan Wenjuan and her three teammates passed the Dead Men's Gully where the climate was the most terrible, climbed the highest point — the Big Pass of Jieshan Mountain in the Xinjiang-Tibet Road, traversed the No-man's Region of Ngari Prefecture in Tibet and reached the base of

Mt. Everest before finally riding back to Lhasa.

Mountain Sickness on Ancient Road

Wan Wenjuan became totally devoted to travelling on bike after the Xinjiang-Tibet trip. Since then she has spent all her vacations riding in Guangdong and Hainan. Last year she even joined another group of bikers in Mainland to ride on the famous Tang-Tubo Ancient Road.

"Travelling has broadened my vision and mind, given me the chance to know people of different places, and made me more tolerant and

encouraged her, "As long as you don't give up, we will never give you up." And she would try her best to take care of her weaker teammates and to help reaching their dreams.

Leading a Simple Life

As most of her riding trips are in remote and wild places, where one has to survive in rough environment, Wan Wenjuan has learned to appreciate life from a different perspective. "Going on trips by bike makes me understand that life can be very simple."

A teacher in Hong Kong, she loves travelling by bike and keeps on exploring new boundary. After reading a story on Hulun Buir in China Tourism, she went to Manzhouli and lived with Ewenki hunters and even went to the North Pole Village in Mohe. Now she still continues to make her travel plans, enjoying it as ever before.

A good biker's website recommended by Wan Wenjuan: www.cyclist.cn



"The biggest problem is not about physical strength, but it is the state of mind. As you can ride slowly, you can build up the strength gradually. Almost everyone can do it"

understanding."

A good teamwork spirit is very important to Wan Wenjuan. On her first trip riding on the Xinjiang-Tibet highway, she ended up staying at a hospital at one point. But her teammate

"I'm not ambitious at career now, and I'm not seeking promotion, because it would only mean a heavier workload. I would like to have more time to travel. My next destination is South America, I'll be riding from Europe back to

Left: Kid pushing her bike

Right: To the source of Yellow River



China."

Woman Bikers are Lucky

Travelling by bike is physically demanding and it seems to be more suitable for men. But Wan Wenjuan had a different opinion, "The biggest problem is not about physical strength, but it is the state of mind. As you can ride slowly, you can build up the strength gradually. Almost everyone can do it."

"Women may enjoy more advantages over men. For instance, there are always guys around to help me with setting up the tent or carrying the

heavier things. They are so helpful because they don't want the girls to drop behind too much, and they would not have to wait too long. Moreover, it is easier for girls to get help. Once, a driver gave me a free ride, and he even invited me for a meal and provided lodging for me."

"I hope to become a volunteer teacher in the Mainland, so I can help the local people and have a deeper understanding of their lives. In rural China, the school conditions are very poor, but the students are studying very hard, for they know that knowledge can provide them a better life. If I can help a little, it would be more meaningful than bike trips."

e

Camping



Started my backpack trip by reading China Tourism



Linda Pun

Dream Making Journalist

I was born in Hong Kong in the 1960s. My parents came from Guangdong rural area and they struggled hard to survive in Hong Kong after WWII.

I later studied at a Christian school, and began to have deeper understanding of the Chinese history and culture. I revere the rich literary heritage and the steadfast and tenacious spirit of the Chinese nation.

Landscape Tour to the Mainland

I became more and more interested in China when I entered middle school, and I relied on newspapers and magazines for information about China. Since then, I have forged a strong bond with the mass media.

Three years later while I was in second year in university, I took a backpack trip to the Mainland with three friends for over a month during summer vacation. We visited the key places of interest and historic sites, including Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Shandong, Mount Taishan, the Yellow Mountain, Shanghai and Hangzhou. The next winter, I also toured northeast China for two weeks to have a taste of the ice and snow, and have my first white lunar New Year's Day.

Just when China began its reform and open-up, its economy was still rather underdeveloped with a scanty material supply. But the people were simple and honest, and we met many warm-hearted people who wanted very much to know the outside world. They asked and listened without giving much comment, but were filled

Tim's Profile

A China news journalist, she loves travelling, especially in the Mainland. She worked for many newspapers, magazines and radio stations, specializing in China's political news. In recent years, she often publishes articles on environmental protection and other social issues.



Left: In south China



Right: In Inner Mongolia

with great expectations for the future. On the train I came to know a friend and our friendship has lasted for more than 20 years. I can still see him now and then, and the kid he carried 20 years ago is now much taller than I am. How time flies!

scholars are putting forward new ideas, and journalists are exposing inside stories of corruption at the risk of their own lives. Last but not least, non-governmental organisations taking actions to care for the marginalised people.

Backpacking: a Way to Experience Life

I started working in the media industry in 1984 when China experienced an upsurge of currents of thought. I had more channels to know or China's political, economic and social transition. Since then, the focus of my visit to China changed. I took trips after work to less popular historic sites related to modern Chinese history. I plan to find out the stories about them so that they would not be forgotten. It is very important for an individual and a country to face its history and make objective reflections.

Over the past decade or more, China's soaring economy has attracted the world's attention. Yet behind this prosperity there are problems of various kinds that have not yet been dealt with properly. As a reporter, I was often grieved about the injustice, poverty, corruption, and pollution.

Despite the numerous problems China is facing today, there are still hopes. More and more

Freedom, Equality and Love

Not long ago I interviewed a voluntary work organisation formed by college students in Guangzhou. They spent all their free time to help teaching in schools in the poor rural areas. Besides bringing new ideas to the local kids, they also gave them care and support. Many of these kids grew up without family life, for most of their parents had to work out of town. Some kids were orphans because their parents died from work-related hazard.

A voluntary student once talked about family value in class, and the whole class ended up in tears. The volunteer said, "We know that we can only do so much, but every little bit counts. We want to encourage these children to persist in adversity and have high aspirations for life!"

These volunteers recorded their work in VCD and showed them to colleges and universities in Guangzhou, hoping to recruit more students to join the volunteering team.





Sara Lai

Roaming in Xishuangbanna

In the eyes of many Chinese, Sara was a strange girl who shaved her head bald. Her career as a trekking guide was unheard of among local people; however, many western travellers came to seek her advice on trekking. Sara wanted to share her travel experience and become a freelance writer one day.

In Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna of Yunnan, stood a small "Forest Cafe". Many foreigners in safari attire came here to look for Sara, who would lead them into the wonderful mountains and to experience the primitive lifestyle of local minorities.

From Chef to Boss

Sara often dressed in ethnic cotton clothes and could speak fluent English. It would be hard to imagine that she was a cook in a nursery school over ten years ago.

"I was born in a small village in Xingping Town of Yangshuo. Graduating from middle

school, I made a living in Guangdong and then worked as cook in a nursery school in Guilin. To better my living, I started to learn English at an evening class. Some teachers of the nursery school even laughed at my effort. Later, I moved to Xishuangbanna and worked in a village named Manchunman in Olive Dam. I fell in love with this beautiful and mysterious place because of the villagers' friendliness and hospitality."

Then she served as a guide at a local travel agency, yet she lost her job when the agency went bankrupt. "At that time, I met Daisy, the hostess of Jinghong Forest Cafe, who could speak fluent English. I volunteered to help her because she was

so busy. I stayed with her for more than ten days, I realised how poor my spoken English was and decided to learn from her."

At that time, there were only two cafes in Jinghong, and Sara thought this is an excellent opportunity to open up her own shop. Therefore, she returned to Yangsuo to learn western cooking in 1996. When she was back, Daisy went to Germany to study, Sara eventually took over the cafe and became the boss of Forest Cafe.

Doing the Unexpected

After a while, she was inspired to be a guide by chance. There was a young man from Hangzhou who often visited Sara's cafe at that time. He was a trekking guide to Tibet and Xishuangbanna, exploring new routes every time. "He was the first outdoor travel guide of Jinghong in those days!" Sara admired his will power and got to know about the industry.

At the end of 1997, Sara met an American with a Rough Guide in hands at her cafe. She made her first trip with him from Bulang Mountain to Damenglilong. "I was not prepared for the long journey. We walked four hours on the first day, 12 hours on the second, and I suffered from aches all over on the third day. But my physical endurance surprised even myself." In August 1998, she took a German boy and an employee for a trip for fun for the first time. Sara finally realised her potential as a guide, and thus started her career.

"My father had once told me, 'Don't follow

the herd. Be yourself and be unique.'" Sara had born the words in mind all along. That was why she became one of the first travel guides in China.

"I thought I would hate outdoor adventures after a few years of experience. Yet, more than six years have gone in a flash. The more I work, the more I like it. This job offers me a chance to experience the mystery and beauty of nature. I am filled with happiness in the greenery. I met many interesting people through this work. My career has run steadily from the third year on. I normally work for 7-10 days on average each month."

Sara tried to combine both the cultural and natural elements of Xishuangbanna in her travel routes. Hence, visitors might appreciate the primitive forest while enjoying the company of ethnic minorities. "Besides leading the way, a trekking guide should introduce local customs as well as local plants. Usually my tours last for up to four days, and each day would involve about four to five hours of walk. The travel plans mainly depend on the interests, time and physical strength of visitors. I would carefully adjust the difficulty of the travel plan to suit most people."

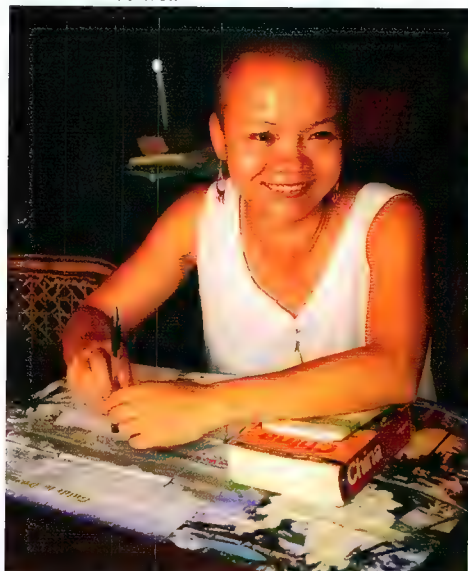
Because both "Lonely Planet" and "Rough Guide" (English Version and Korean Version) had written about Sara and her Forest Cafe before, many foreigners came all the way to look for Sara in Xishuangbanna.

Staying with Minority Families

Sara would try to arrange travellers to stay

Left: Shaved head becomes Sara's icon

Right: Since Sara needed to communicate with the minorities, she could speak a little bit of Ai and Dai as well





with local minority families for a night or two. "I would try to pick the hosts and hostesses who could create an atmosphere to make the visitors feel at home."

"As in the Asian way, I would pay the hosts discreetly at the end by placing the notes under the pillow or quilt." Sara also had to be selective about visitors for she needed to protect the hospitable and generous minorities from being taking advantage of. "If I think the travellers are unsuitable for the trip, I would never have them stayed with the families."

Since Sara needed to communicate with the minorities all the time, she could speak a little bit of Ai and Dai dialects as well.

Cultural Clashes

Sara's baldness was not a fashion statement; she suffered from a serious hair loss in the second half of 1995, and she saw a famous doctor in Lijiang. The doctor gave her some powder and advised her to cut her hair short so she could fresh



Left: Many foreigners in safari attire came here to look for Sara
Right: Sara's Forest Cafe

ginger extracts on the scalp. She gave it some thought and decided that she might as well shave it off when returned to Xishuangbanna.

"Most Chinese youth think that my shaved head is cool, but most middle-aged people would find it unacceptable and they could not tell me apart from a guy. Once I was pulled over by a woman on the food market, and she cried, 'Why does a pretty girl like you keep such an ugly hairstyle?'"

"On the other hand, I received a lot of compliments from foreigners. Some of them would just walk into my cafe and tell me how much they love my haircut."

Sharing Experience

Sara had a wish all along. She wanted to share her experience as a guide. "I have written diary all these years. It should not be difficult for me to gather all my funny stories into a volume. I hope to take it as a hobby instead of an ambitious career move."

Sara's Profile

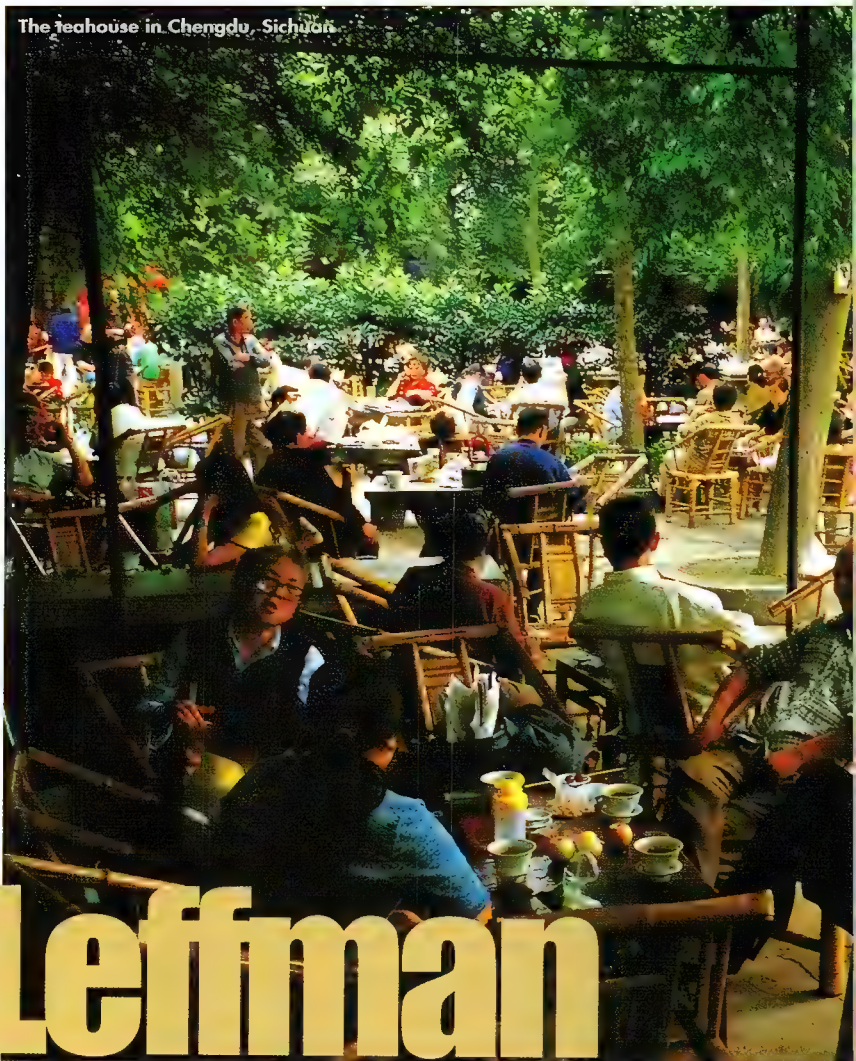
Sara was born in a small village in Ximeng of Yunnan in 1974. She came to Xishuangbanna in 1993 and worked for 10 years. She has worked as a trekking guide for the past six years. She enjoys reading, writing, travelling, making friends and online.

As a travel journalist of Rough Guide, David Leffman has shared about his travel experience in China with Western readers for the past 15 years. He is passionate about Chinese culture: Three Kingdoms, Wudang Kungfu, traditional Chinese natural therapy, teahouses of Chengdu, and milk of human kindness.

Hurray China!

David Leffman

The teahouse in Chengdu, Sichuan



David Leffman was born in United Kingdom. His first trip to China was to seek inspiration for his painting. Since David had studied the history of European arts and photography in university, his friend advised him to take a tour to Japan, because Yamato-e had made a profound influence upon modern western arts.

"After my trip to Japan, I was still hungered for more. Since Japanese culture arose from China, I prefer to seek the source of origin."

The Rough Guide

David has been writing the "Rough Guide: China" for almost 15 years since 1991. He revisits a place every three years for update, and often produces more in-depth articles as a result.

It takes more to write a comprehensive tourist guide than just filling it with information. David aims to promote cultural tourism. He goes into

details about the culture and history of the scenic spots, and tells you where to find the authentic local food. "If a westerner leaves China without tasting the local culture, he should not come here in the first place."

Learning History through Travel

On the other hand, David is not without regret. "Sometimes, I would hesitate to write about a new tourist attraction in the book. Too many tourists may bring disaster to the natural environment."

An example is Yangshuo. The former quiet village of Guangxi is now crowded with hotels and bars. It is common to find drunken foreigners lying on the street at night.

David always tries his best to give his readers a full picture of China, and he rarely worries losing his readers by introducing some of the less-known



David Leffman
in Hong Kong

David Leffman, author of "Rough Guide: China", enjoys reading the stories of Three Kingdoms and going to Sichuan teahouses. He is infatuated with Kungfu and traditional Chinese medicine over recent years.

spots. For this, he won complete confidence from his publisher.

David is passionate about the history of Three Kingdoms, and thus, falls in love with Sichuan and Chongqing. He includes many stories of Three Kingdoms in his guidebook. "To understand a place, you should learn its history first. It would make your travel more interesting."

I met David on the day he came back from Wudang Mountains. He told me that he was crazy about Kungfu and traditional Chinese herbal medicine. "Natural remedies are effective by seeking a harmony between different parts of body."

The Hospitable Nation

David has also written travel guides in different Southeast Asia countries, but he stayed

in China for 15 years because Chinese people are so hospitable.

For those who don't know China well, they may see Chinese as cold and shrewd. Yet, David has a completely different experience, and used to having curious locals to accompany him on his journey. "Chinese people are very warm-hearted and generous once you get to know them."

Not only does David appreciate the friendly characters of Chinese, he also thinks highly of their traditional values "In China, children will live with their parents. The neighbours help each other like a big family. In the western society, people are more reserved." On his first trip to China, the human kindness moved David deeply.

David believes that China can balance out the power in the west. "It is not only about politics or economics. Culture-wise, China should uphold its eastern traditional value. The western world is terrified after the terrorism attack. China, quite the opposite, is making huge progress. It joins the WTO and is going to host the Olympics in 2008; China is marching forward with confidence."



Sharon Wong

The Young Archaeologist

Sharon Wong's interest in archaeology began in her second year in university, when she visited the remains from Neolithic Age in Mawan, Hong Kong, one of the top ten archaeologist discoveries in 1997.

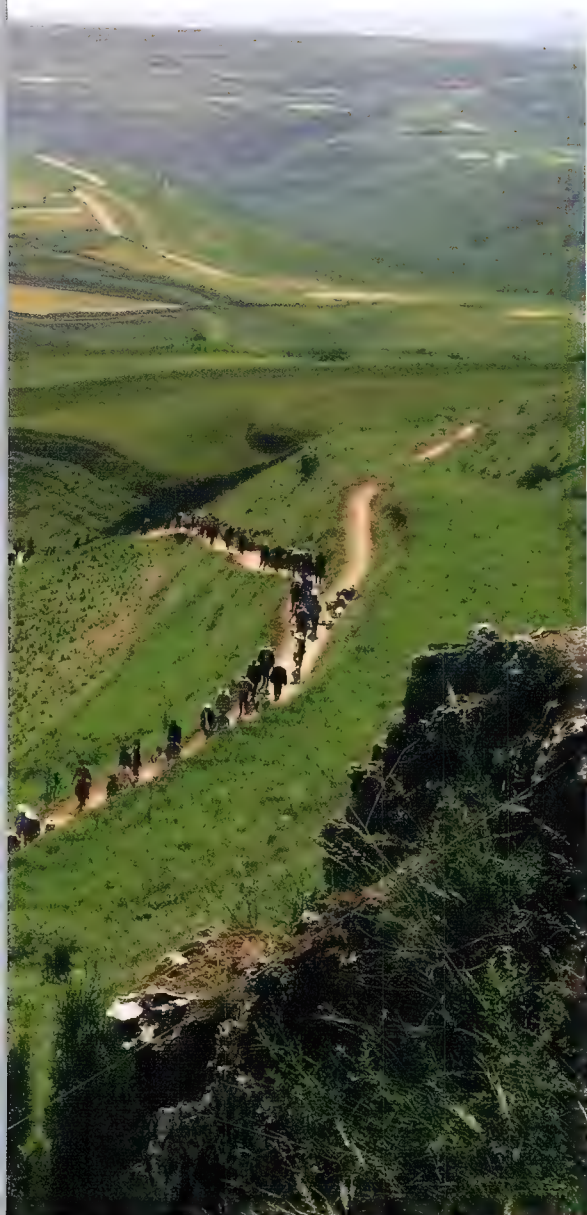
Hard Times

After graduation from university, Sharon got a job in a private archaeological institute in Hong Kong as an assistant. Her interest in archaeology even got stronger and she enrolled in Beijing University — the most established archaeological institute in China. In September 2000, Sharon was admitted into the university, and started her three-year study as a graduate student.

Unlike local classmates who had already received a four-year basic training during their undergraduate study, Sharon's bachelor degree was on Sociology and she had to start from nothing. But she remained positive, "The knowledge of sociology is based on field surveys and visits, just like archaeology." Sharon's study seemed to be going fine since, and she formed a solid foundation in her first year.

Heading to the Origin of Zhou Dynasty

Sharon's first challenge is a field trip to Shaanxi in her second year. Her destinations were Qishan and Fufeng, the birthplace of the culture of Zhou Dynasty.



Left: Zhouyuan ruins is the birthplace of Zhou Dynasty over 2,000 years ago

Right: Study in excavation pits

history, such as Neolithic Age, Western Zhou, Warring-States Period, Qin and Han dynasties. Most of the objects discovered are pottery, some bronze, bone or stone.

Sharon said that the half a year she spent there was very unforgettable.

"My teachers have a very careful and prudent working attitude. Archaeology, as a science, has no room for the slightest mistake. Each step must be done in an extremely earnest and serious manner. A porcelain shred, seemingly insignificant to inexperienced students, may take them several months of study. However, studying these remains left by our remote ancestors is quite enjoyable." After the field trip, Sharon was more engaged in her study.

Searching for Another Dream

After graduating from Beijing University, Sharon returned to Hong Kong and worked as an archaeological assistant in a college. Her job was to carry out professional meetings related to porcelain exhibitions. She occasionally attended some academic meetings in Mainland China, but she felt that they were not enough.

To continue her archaeological dream, Sharon went to Singapore for a doctorate degree. Her interest was foreign-trade porcelain in history.

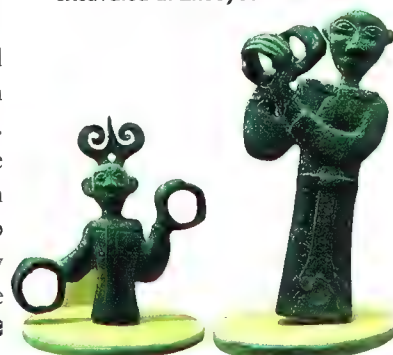
"I discovered my real interest after I studied archaeology," she said. "My interest is now on export porcelain from China's southern coasts. Since such porcelains were sold outside the country, valuable shreds had discovered in Southeast Asia, Japan and European countries so far. However, scholars in this field are mostly foreigners, so I would like to make some contributions from an Asian perspective."

"It is the birthplace of Zhou Dynasty culture over 2,000 years ago," said Sharon. "The feudalistic system of the dynasty leaves a far-reaching influence on later dynasties. For this reason, these places are vitally important in archaeological studies. In a place with so much cultural heritage, a training opportunity is hard to come by." The group had three teachers and about 20 students, who were involved in a real excavation project on site.

Guided by her teachers, Sharon studied carefully every day in excavation pits to record, photograph and draw unearthed items. After these procedures, she would carefully categorise and document each of them.

The relics are from different periods in

The bronze figure excavated at Zhouyuan





Vivian Tso Going Her Own Way

Vivian Tso, a woman with a mind of her own, has stepped foot on every corner of China. Tibet is her favourite spot. She pays a visit there every year no matter what. She thinks that Tibet reveals to her the truth about life and it renews her tired spirit.

Vivian Tso's curiosity about Tibet was triggered by a traveller whom she met at a shabby hotel in Bayinbuluke of Xinjiang. The person told her to be patient, for the condition of the best hotel in Ali was worse than there.

For the Challenge

Most people would hang back on hearing those words, but Vivian was determined to challenge herself with the trip to Tibet — even when her companions pulled out at the last

minute.

Vivian prefers travelling solo than putting up with companions who she does not get along. She once travelled with several friends she met on internet, and the girls turned out to be fastidious and troublesome.

"One should be grateful that I finally found an accommodation in the desolate mountains, but they were only concerned about doing facials. Also, they were fuzzy about food and insisted to have the locals to kill their livestock for them. One time, they ate the last few chickens in the poor village. I dislike people



Left: Tibetan kid

Right: Nam Co in Tibet



Vivian Tso is straightforward, likes spicy food and talks quickly. She wishes to keep a youthful mentality and hopes that she will own a bar in Guangzhou one day.

who cannot leave their urban life behind when travelling."

As a result, Vivian has started to enjoy travelling by herself.

Life and Death Moment

She has become attached to Tibet since she stepped on the soil. All the hardships and dangers on the journey become wonderful memory. Vivian is now a regular visitor to Tibet, and she needs to enjoy the sun of Lhasa at least once every year.

She has become a Tibetan Buddhist and she enjoys pondering about life in such a religious atmosphere tremendously.

Tibet changed her philosophy about life. Vivian realised the insignificance of men in the

embrace of nature. "In the past, I believed that I have the power to control my own destiny. Now, I understand that life is beyond what we imagine."

Cherishing Urban Life

Vivian often travels and publishes articles, but she is neither a full-time writer nor photographer. Similar to most town folks, she shuttles back and forth in her office. But on her spare time, Vivian hosts a tourist discussion group on the internet and she writes travel books. She is now the author of "Guide to Tibet" and several other tourist guides.

Hong Kong is her home, but Tibet is a place to comfort her mind and broaden her horizon.

The Long March took them a total 384 days



Fascinated by the stories of Long March in the 1930s, two British men were inspired by the idea of retracing the Red Army's trail. After two years of preparations, they finally set out from Jiangxi and arrived at northern Shaanxi, completing the 384-day journey.

And On the Long March

A Change of Life

Andrew McEwen and Ed Jocelyn met in the University of Manchester when there were students. After graduation, Andrew worked as a journalist in London for three years, then in the United States for six years. Looking for a new challenge, he became a newspaper reporter based in China.

On the other hand, Ed Jocelyn completed his Ph.D. on History in Manchester and he taught in a university after graduation. Working on his research topic of Soviet Union's history, he enjoyed a decent salary and has been to Russia

several times. Yet, Ed decided to join Andrew in China in 1997 for he was seeking new elements in life too.

The New Long March

They worked for "China Daily" and "Beijing Youth Daily". In May 2000, they travelled to Liping of Guizhou, a once turbulent land. Both Andrew and Ed suddenly had a thought of retracing the Army's trail and relive the history of the Long March. After two years of preparations, the "Two-man Long March" began from Yudu in Jiangxi Province on 16 October 2002. They



Left: Retracing the Red Army's trail

Right: Cross Luding bridge in Sichuan

Ed and Andrew came to know each other at University of Manchester. In 2002, they traced the trail of the Long March, and became the only foreigners who have completed the Long March besides Otto Braun.

completed this hard journey and reached Wuqi in northern Shaanxi on the November 3 of 2003. The Long March took them a total of 384 days.

On the third day after they set out, Andrew began to suffer from nausea and the ailment followed him throughout the long march. He once got back to Beijing for two months to have a body-check. It turned out that he had a trachea and lungs infection and needed to rest of three months. Ignoring the doctor's warning, he joined Ed six days later in Luding of Sichuan. On their way, they got some Chinese friends joining them, and showed them around the rural China.

Witnessing the Changes Of China

Among the people who have retraced the trail of the Long March, Luo Kaifu is someone Ed really admired. Luo completed the journey 20 years ago and had finished a book recording what he saw on his way. As a historian, when arriving a new place, Ed would immediately check what Luo wrote in the book. The great

changes that China has been undergoing in these 20 years were very interesting. Ed and Andrew are working on their Long March book at the moment as well. They hoped that 20 years later, someone would take their book to trace the trail of their Long March.

Ed will start his second Long March featuring Yunnan and Sichuan with Yang Xiao this November. Andrew is too busy to join them, but he claims that if any of them are not well, he will join immediately.

Andrew's wish is to study Chinese. When he first came to China, he did not plan to stay that long, and therefore he had no intention to learn Chinese. Now that his girlfriend in Beijing makes him stay in China, which means that he must learn Chinese. Andrew would like to study in university in Beijing once he saves enough.

Ed and Andrew finished three books that published in the Mainland and Hong Kong. Currently, Ed and Andrew are working as freelance journalists and writing their books at the same time.



The scenery of Jinyun of Zhejiang



John McMillan

The Path Less Travelled

Growing up under the gray sky of Scotland, I chose to study Chinese in Oxford University though both of his parents were professors of English Literature. Currently I'm studying and teaching English in Jinyun of Zhejiang, and I also visits Xinjiang, Sichuan and Yunnan in my spare time. I have a long-term goal to cover news in China.

I was enrolled in the Chinese Department of Oxford University before I came to China, and I plan to stay here for a year to familiarise myself with the environment. I believe it would be helpful for my study.

I was asked to teach English to a group of teenagers between 12 to 16 years old. This is a good opportunity for me to learn Chinese. Because if I spend a year travelling on the road, I would most likely make friends with other foreigners like myself and know little about China.

Teacher vs Rock Star

On the first day of my arrival, I barely got past the front gate when the more alert children spotted me. A cheer went up, then the shouts of "Waiguoren" (foreigners!) followed as they ran towards me, as if there might be something more to see from close up. They tagged along all the way to the middle school gates, some of them whispering and pointing, and some of them shouting and pointing.

I spent my first lesson with a junior 2 class,



other foreign language teachers in Scotland, I was treated like a rock star in Jinyun Middle School. I spent most of my first lesson — and I'm not kidding — signing autographs. I also remember suggesting that saying to me "How do you do?" was now considered too old-fashioned. As a pedagogic achievement it might have been a little slight, but it was a start.

The students calmed down after a few weeks. I was no longer a rock star, more like a real teacher. There was a comfortable atmosphere in the class. I had the advantage of speaking fluent English; they had the advantage of speaking fluent Chinese.

I once found a passage in a Senior 1 textbook, advising students on the bizarre behaviours that they might encounter in dealings with foreign

Teaching English in
Jinyun of Zhejiang



with students of about 13 who have been learning English for about a year and a half. When I was at secondary school in Scotland I had a few language teachers, a couple for French and a couple for German. It was the same with all of them. Eager to please, they would come in with an enthusiastic smile, "Good Morning, let's start by getting to know each other" or alternatively, "So, want to ask me know where I came from?" And for the following ten minutes there would be no sound except the slowly ticking clock. These teachers would deal with the situation in one of three ways: talk throughout the hour regardless, get angry and tell us what a golden opportunity we were missing, or burst into tears. None of these was a good tactic to rely on. I pushed open the door and marched straight to the front of the class. Unlike

teachers: "Foreign teachers often seemed informal in class and sometimes tried to inject humour into their lessons. This, though, does not make them bad teachers but only reflects their different cultures and educational systems." I found it oddly pleasing to conform to such stereotype. I taught my students a song I like and got them to act out little plays, and they laughed at my occasional attempts to speak Chinese. But no matter how much I taught them about my culture, not one of them could be persuaded that seven in the morning was not a good time to knock on my door, or understand that Scottish people get really angry when you describe their country as being "part of England". On April's Fools Day, one class put a toy snake on the top of the door, and it fell on my head as I came in. They found it

hysterical; I didn't really get it.

My "UnChinese" Experience

Every morning, there was some irritatingly jaunty and loud music being played in the campus. In Scotland, six o'clock in the morning is widely regarded as a ludicrous hour, much more associated with the night before than the morning after. But the marching anthem continued for a good five minutes, and was followed by some Backstreet Boys songs before silence returned.

I kept up with my walking in the hills and through the nearby villages. People tended to be

Left: Students of junior 2 class

Right: Study Chinese in Oxford University



much less vocal in their shock at seeing me in the countryside. They looked up from their work, took me in, looked unimpressed, and went back to their work. I was quite taken aback at first; I had begun to think of myself as more noteworthy.

It was beautiful in the hills and I liked walking through the old-fashioned courtyard houses. I peeked through the doors, glimpsing for a domestic routine: a mother and daughter cooking, men playing cards, and kids being told off. The children were always more excited when they caught a glimpse of me. Walking through a small village I was tailed by a gang of them who pretended to shoot me as they hid behind doors. I played along, my terrified look rendered half-real by the barking dogs that stood beside them.

Before I arrived, I had read a lot about China and expressed enough opinions about Zhou Enlai to impress my university professor. But when I finally stood on this mysterious land, I realised that China was so much different from my imagination.

Oxford University vs Peking University

Whenever I shared with others about my study at Oxford, the local students here would volunteer to teach me a poem titled "Goodbye to Cambridge" by the Chinese poet Xu Zhimo. They were obviously confused about Oxford and Cambridge. Yet, I knew my feeling for Cambridge



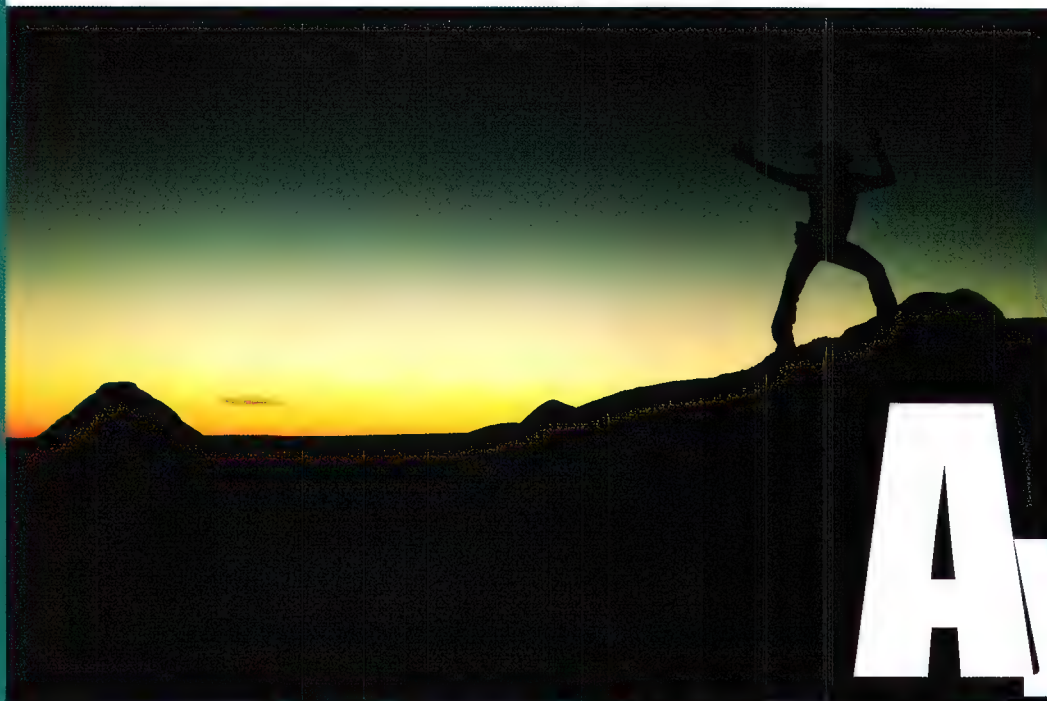
would not be the same after my visit in China.

I mainly learnt Chinese by listening to tapes during my first year at Oxford. The standard mandarin seemed to come straight out from the news channel of CCTV. Having stayed in China for a year, my mandarin improved and my understanding of China deepened. The experience laid a solid foundation for my study and pointed a new direction for me. I planned to focus my study on politics and modern history of China in my final academic year. After graduation, I would like to work as a journalist in China.

I would join the exchange programme of Peking University in the summer of 2006. I would be looking forward to watch the Olympics in Beijing in 2008. I felt lucky to have a chance to visit China before that.

G

John McMillan is born in Glasgow, Scotland. He chose Chinese over English literature as his university major at Oxford University. During his stay in China, he went to the most memorable rock-and-roll concert in Yulong Snow Mountain of Lijiang.



The Reporter Turned Tour Guide

Aiy had a rather interesting motive to change his career - he was displeased about the general decline in service within the travel industry. After a trip to Thailand, Aiyi decided to take up the trade of a tour guide, resolving to be the model guide. His new career, in return, opened up his eyes to the beauty of China and the wonderful local people.

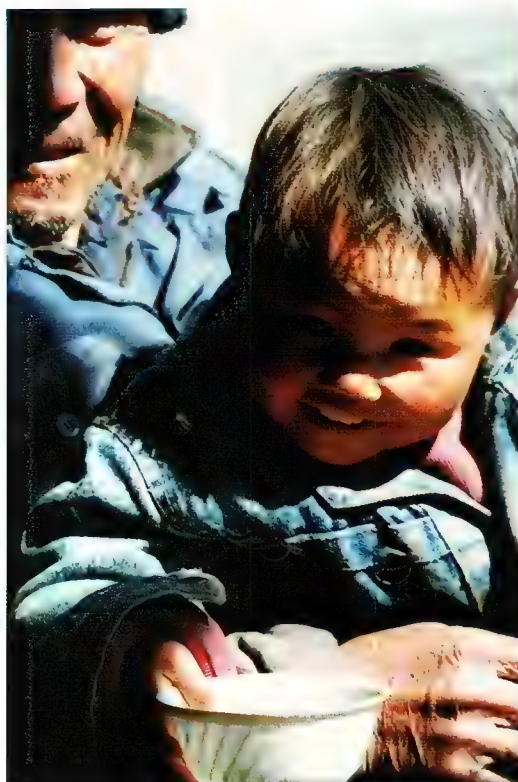


When Aiyi quitted his job as a news reporter, he didn't expect to "work" in the vast and gorgeous landscape of China.

"I was involved in a traffic accident in my previous job and was also rejected by a girl I loved, so I joined a tour group to Thailand to relax. On my return trip, I was told to tip the tour guide, who made only one appearance just before the trip ended. I was outraged and thought that I could have done a much better job!"

Back to Hong Kong, Aiyi became a tour guide and started taking visitors to the Mainland.

"Since the 1990s competition among tourist agencies intensified and most of the agencies had



to lower their prices to attract customers. With a sharp drop in profit, many tour guides made up their income difference by taking tourists to prearranged shops who would pay them commissions. I once tried to take a group to shop in an expensive jade company. An old lady in the group asked me to bargain for her. I cut the price down to one tenth and she got the piece of jade she loved. But I didn't expect that she bought another one as a gift for me. I was both moved and ashamed." Being disappointed with the practice of the trade, Ayi decided to give up.

Taking up the Trade Again

While he was looking for another job, an old friend invited him to substitute a guide who was responsible to escort a 25-person photography group to Xinjiang.


"We had to travel in remote and dangerous places from Kanas to Kashi, and then to the border of Mongolia. During the long and strenuous journey, it was not easy to maintain a harmonious relationship among all the group members, and I was under great pressure. So after arriving at Kashi, I left the group and went to stroll alone in a local market. During my walk, a little Uygur kid pulled my shirt. I thought he was begging, but it turned out that he was playing with

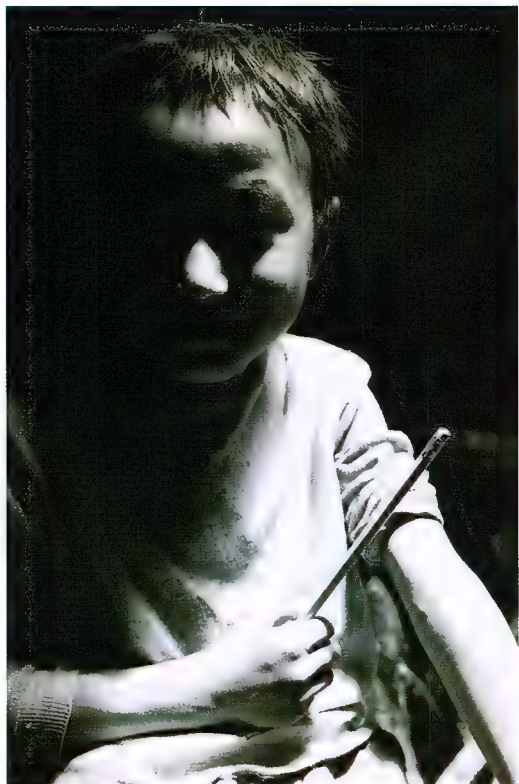
me. I ran after him and took a picture of him. Before long, many kids came. Although we couldn't understand each other, we could communicate through body languages and laughter. All my pressure was gone instantly. Later I found that other group members had similar experience and it was great fun to share it. It melted away all my bad mood."

Through the trip Ayi came to know that there are such pure hearted people and magnificent landscape in China. He changed his mind at once and continued to work as a tour guide.

Experiencing Cultural Differences

Ayi took many pictures of the people he met on the road and generously shared his works with them. It is rare for ethnic minorities who live in distant areas to have a picture of themselves.

In addition to human interests, the magnificent landscape also made Ayi attached to the Mainland. "Once I showed some pictures of the desert in northern Shaanxi to my friends and they thought it was taken in Egypt. I hope to let more friends know about the beautiful landscapes in China." His photos of Mt. Everest, Mound Forest in Ngari Prefecture, and Five-colour Pool in Xinjiang are stunning enough to the travel fans who know nothing of China. 



Ayi's Profile

A photography fan who loves China, Ayi used to work as a news reporter. He then became a tour guide who escorted visitors to the Mainland. In recent years he made many trips to Tibet, Xinjiang and other ethnic minority areas, capturing the friendly local people with his lens.

Left: Jokhang lamasery of Lhasa

Right: Camping at Nam Co

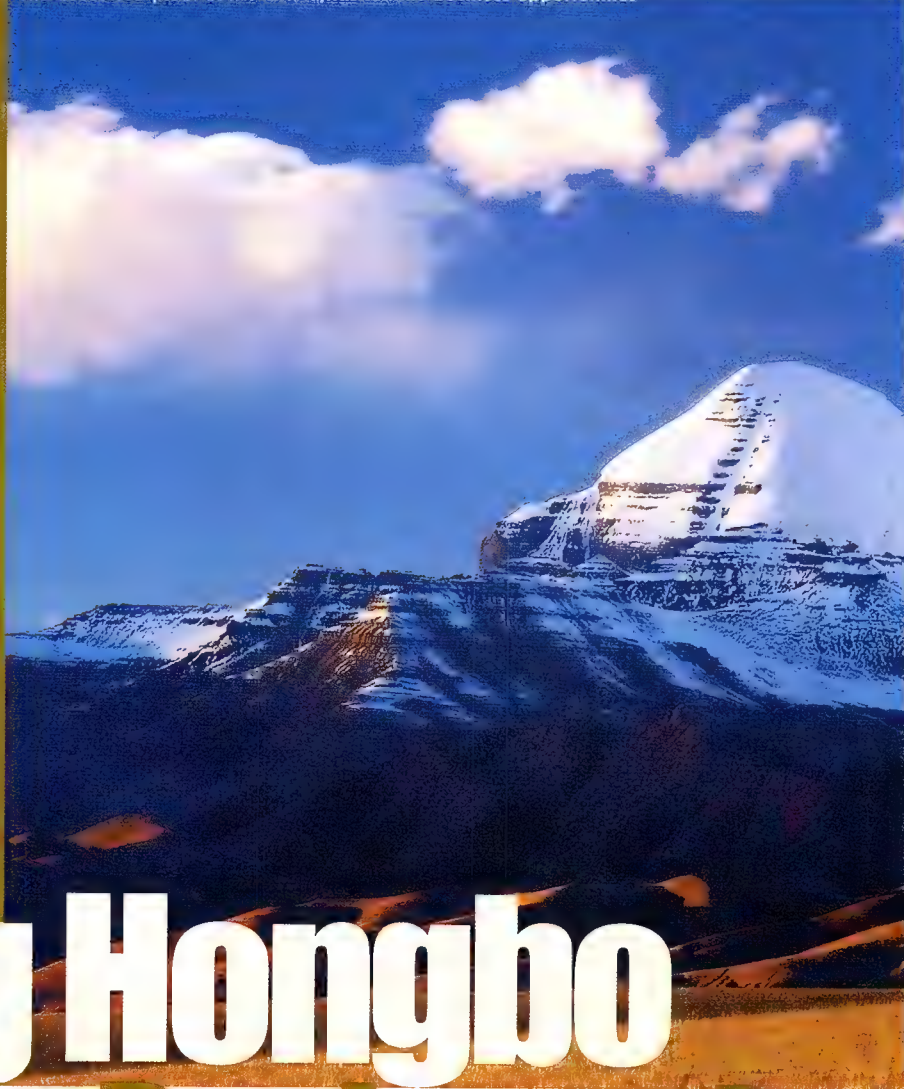


It is true that Chaozhou people are good businessmen.

Zhang Hongbo believes that Ali of Tibet, the desolate Roof of the World", has infinite business opportunities. To him, there are vast gold mines hidden in the mountain chains. He plans to improve the traffic network, introduce various entertainment facilities to the soldiers who guard the borders, and provide accommodation and vehicle maintenance service for people who travel from the neighbouring countries of South Asia.

It is travel that broadens the horizon and mind of the Zhang Hongbo.

The desolated (Roof of the World) has infinite business opportunities



Zhang Hongbo Doing Business in Ali of Tibet

Zhang Hongbo is the founder of Guangzhou-Shenzhen Greyhound Bus. Unlike his competitors, he delivers reliable service and his buses always depart on time even if there is only one passenger. His good reputation has won him many passengers. In 1995, Zhang went to Tibet to seek commercial opportunities in Ali. He had opened various businesses, such as bus stations, hotels, stores, bowling alleys and even ore mine.

Lhasa—Ali Bus Operates All Year Round

I backpacked to Tibet last winter. I was delighted to find that there was a new bus line that travelled from Lhasa to Ali all year round. Zhang Hongbo later told me that he had run this bus line for many years and made a joint operation with a state-owned company in Tibet. In winter, the departing time for buses is unstable due to fewer



I find that the rare sceneries, history and religious culture in Tibet are unparalleled in the world

Zhang Hongbo, an exceptional businessman of Chaozhou, enjoys travelling, experiencing different cultures, and seeking various commercial opportunities on his journey.

passengers, and travellers can make prior arrangement in advance.

Zhang Hongbo is the chairman of the board of Tibet Ali Antelope Transportation Company at present. He adopts a leisure lifestyle when he studied in New Zealand in earlier years. He will take a three-month break from work each year and travels. For instance, he will pick to stay at the most expensive hotel of Europe and take time to visit the most genuine teahouse. Striving for the best becomes his driving force.


Zhang Hongbo is attached to Ali. "I like travelling and has visited many places. But I find that the rare sceneries, history and religious culture in Tibet are unparalleled in the world."

Many businessmen and workers from Gansu, Xinjiang, Sichuan, India, and Nepal, often visit Tibet. Zhang Hongbo's employees are from eight different nationalities. "Tibet neighbours Burma,

India, Bhutan, Nepal and Kashmir; it is a multi-cultural society. In Ali, you may find many children of interracial marriages; the exchanges between neighbouring nations are close. The inhabitants in Pulan once told that they are more than 50 roads to India." Zhang Hongbo said.

High Purchasing Power of Soldiers

In the Central Plaza of Shiquanhe, capital of Ali, stands a fine bowling alley built with materials shipped from Italy. I was at first perplexed about such fancy facility appearing in the remote and poor plateau. Zhang explained to me, "I built the alley for soldiers, not tourists. The borders neighbouring Ali are stationed with armed forces, and there were no one to provide them entertainment. Life is hard on the highland, and I would like to offer a new game for them."

He is busy planning the chain backpacking accommodations in the west. He said, "The hotels will be painted with traditional and genuine Tibetan colours, and I'll introduce modern management. The future is bright." 

Under the blue sky of Qinghai



Sherman Kwok

Searching for a Dream

I am a natural born dreamer who has been thoroughly enchanted by China.

I started off with a simple trip to China, but very soon, I enjoyed travelling here so much that I wanted to reach farther and stay longer. Eventually, I realised that I wanted to live on this land.

National Anthem

I determined to put my dream into reality the moment I sang the national anthem.

In one scorching summer, I went to Guangzhou to study for ten weeks when I was a student. As everyone there had to sing the national anthem, I too was excited to join despite my disjointed and awkward pronunciation. My poor performance surprised the local students, as

they could not imagine anyone, let alone a Hong Kong student, who could not even sing the national anthem.

My first job after graduation involved a combination of volunteering, guiding and translating. I majored in social work, yet I was also interested in travelling and communication. My supervisor made me an ambassador to promote the culture of China. All of a sudden, I fell in love with my position.

My job was to show American adoptive parents around in China, and I witnessed so many moving scenes when the frightened Chinese orphans meeting their even more frightened parents. I was honoured to build this "Sino-America bridge" like no other diplomatic policies could.

When I gave them a tour to the Great Wall,



Left: Shaolin Temple of Henan



Right: Qinghaihu Lake

Sherman Kwok's Profile

Sherman Kwok, an idealistic and adventurous social worker, dreamed to travel all over the whole world. She also wished to live in Spain one day. At present, Sherman is enjoying the urban life and learning Kungfu in Hong Kong.

Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum and Tengwang Pavilion, these big-built foreigners had a difficult time adjusting themselves to the steep stairs that are all too common in China. They would also bring up a variety of different topics, such as the evolvement of Chinese characters and the interesting customs. Sometimes, people would even ask critical question like whether the Three Gorges Project brought excessive ecological damages.

Sometimes, I was glad that I could act as a middle person to promote China, despite my lack of in-depth understanding of my own homeland.

Some of my work experience was not so great. Once I led a group of foreigners to experience the rural life at the skirt of Nanchang. We brought a couple boxes of chocolate as gifts, but it caused a jostle of the greedy villagers. We were saddened by their behaviour and left silently.

My Work at the Orphanage in Qinghai

At the end of 2003, I worked at an orphanage in the far-away Qinghai. I was not sure whether the courage came from my ambition or my desire to pursuit another lifestyle.

Many people see that Qinghai as the entry point to Tibet, but this beautiful place offers so much more.

I liked Qinghai Lake very much and also loved the kind-hearted Tibetans living there. I liked the desolated Danxia Hoodoos of Kanbula, and the Gui De hot spring embraced by the Yellow River. I also enjoyed taking pictures of the men and women bathing in the hot spring.

I biked and walked with the locals in Qinghai, in spite of the high altitude and strenuous journey.

I took pleasure in riding a shabby bus and breathing in the thin air of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau while watching the Tibetans and the Huis strolling on the street. I liked the diversity and uniqueness of Xining.

My Next Dream

I lived this way for a few years. What might take others ten years to travel, I visited them all in just several years. My tired body finally started to protest, and I needed my rest.

Eventually, I returned to Hong Kong, a place where I had dreamed to escape from. My friends tried to persuade me to stay here and enjoy the urban life. They could not read me clearly; I would not give up my favourite journey.

During my "rest", I learnt to master Mandarin and Spanish, which would lead me to a farther place. In addition, I became crazy about Kungfu and dreamed to visit Shaolin Temple one day.



Liao Qin

As a painter, Liao Qin was enticed by the fascinating Tibet. She could not tear herself away from the place and returned to it again and again. Eventually she married a Tibetan and settled there.

Marrying a Tibetan

In the early 1980s when China began to reform and open-up, many people were determined to get rich. But Liao Qin was in pursuit of an artistic quest, and she went alone to sketch at Jiuzhaigou. From then on, she just couldn't refrain from travelling around. Putting aside her family and quitting her job, she journeyed all over the country, which included Yunnan, Sichuan, Hainan, and the three provinces in the northeast. She said, "I was born in the year of the horse and I cannot stop myself from running in the open air!"

Of all her trips, the place that transformed her life is Tibet. Since 1992, she has made four trips to

Tibet. The first time she went there to seek inspiration for sketch, but she then realised that Tibet was simply too beautiful to be painted. In her second Tibetan trip she spent two months and staged a feat by riding a China-made motorbike over thousands of kilometres on the roof of the world with four young men. They followed the Sichuan-Tibet Road to Lhasa, then from there crossed the 5,320-m-high Tanggula Mountain to Golmud via the Qinghai-Tibet Road. Traversing 11 provinces and cities, they reached Beijing before returning to Chongqing.

In 1996, Liao Qin found that she could no longer stand the city life. Just at that time, she was

assigned to photograph the local folk art works in Lhasa. She said to her friend in Tibet jokingly, "I wish to find a Tibetan man who can keep me here." To her surprise, her friend immediately introduced Jogod, a herdman's son from Nam Co, to her. On the second day of their acquaintance, Jogod gave Liao Qin the key of his home. In August 1997, with great expectations, Liao Qin married the Tibetan man nine years younger than she was. They held a romantic Tibetan wedding ceremony by Lake Namtso, thus she began her new life.

"Tibetan men might sleep for three or four days straight after being drunk; they don't have the habit of taking a shower. I became the mother of two adopted children right after marrying him, and we couldn't understand each other's language." Liao Qin told me the story of her marriage in Tibet.

"The first year after I married him, I had to give up my job at an advertising company and devoted whole heartedly to take care of the children. These small chores took a lot of energy!" Now Liao Qin is used to eating zanba (Tibetan staple food made of roasted qingke barley flour), and her husband Jogod also gave up drinking for health reason, but he took a fancy on coffee

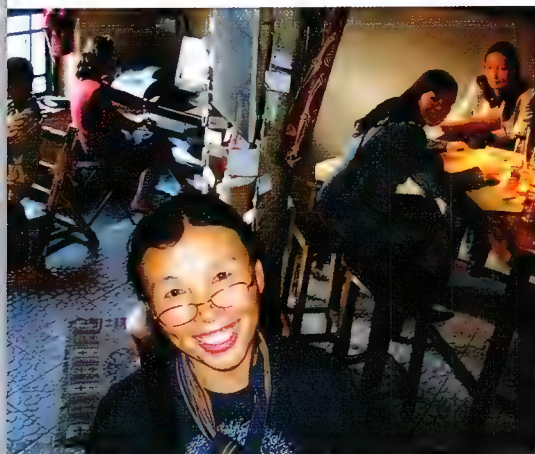
instead! "There are many interesting stories between us because of cultural clashes. We would like to write a book entitled "A Couple's Midnight Chat" to record these stories. There has never been anyone making such a truthful recording."

Liao started searching for new adventures after she settled down. In autumn 2000, she found that there was a training school for the blind run by foreigners. It received over 20 blind children from all over Tibet. Liao Qin contacted the organisation and offered to teach the blind children to paint.

In May 2005, she drove all over Tibet in a jeep and she planned to build the first drivers' campsite in Tibet. In the same year, she opened a bar where people who love Tibet from all over the world could have a place to relax.

"I have too many stories to tell. After fifty, one reaches the stage when one has tasted the cream of life. After staying in Tibet for eight years, I have begun to feel confined and I'm not as creative as before. Recently I went to some big cities with my daughter and even fell in love with Gulangu in Xiamen. I thought it might be a good idea to settle there and start painting again, or write a book or make a film."

A native of Chongqing, Liao Qin loves art and travel. In the early 1980s she had already visited many tourist destinations like Jiuzhaigou and Lugu Lake. In her early 40s, she rode motorbike with friends along the Sichuan-Tibet highway to Lhasa, then to Beijing through 11 provinces before returning to Chongqing, covering almost 10,000 km. She married a Tibetan in her 40s and began a new life.



Left large: A romantic Tibetan wedding ceremony by Nam Co

Left: She opened a bar where people who love Tibet from all over the world could have a place to relax

Right: Horse, her 50 birthday gift

Chu Ka Hong

Living My Journey

Chu Ka Hong ran a cafe in Lijiang a few years ago after he travelled all over China. But when he found that Lijiang had slowly commercialised, his dream of living in a utopia was shattered and decided that he might as well move his cafe to Shanghai, a highly commercialised city.



Chu established his business in Mainland in 1999, hoping to make a fortune as well as lived a leisure life. He named his cafe BOONNA, and his regular customers include young artists and expatriates.

Addict to Travel

Chu Ka Hong had worked at a bank in Hong Kong before moving to Shanghai. After he fell in love with China's northeast after his first trip, he later spent all his holidays visiting all over China: the northeast and northwest regions, central plains, south of Yangtze River, west of Zhejiang, and north of Fujian. Chu quitted his job in 1993 and wandered in Europe and the Silk Road of Xinjiang for more than half a year. To acquire more time for travel, Chu worked for a logistics company. In 1996, he went to Tibet with three friends and stunned by the majestic landscape of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

When he came to Lijiang, Chu fell in love with the nice and quiet town. At the end of 1999,

he opened the cafe hotel "Prague". Later, he went to Shanghai and established BOONNA in 2001.

The Colours of Plateau

BOONNA is decorated with the distinct colours of sunshine yellow, bright red and purple — the colours of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. It stands out from the all-too-common luxurious cafes and bars around the area. Chu fills its bookshelves with many tourist magazines, and he carefully chooses the photographs and music for this place.

After BOONNA was opened, Chu would travel for a month each year. One time he had planned to go to Pakistan, but was held back at the border. Fortunately, Chu was resourceful enough to immediately change his plan. He ended up joining the Xuedun Festival in Lhasa.

Being such an experienced traveller, Chu met many acquaintances and made many new friends in his cafe.



Chu's cafe BOONNA in Shanghai

Like others, he is tired of urban life even though he can take holidays whenever he wants. Chu soon finds the life in Shanghai dull and plans for his next destination. In the past three years, he has moved six times. He especially appreciated the old-style gardens and rooms in the area of foreign settlement, for he can learn about the history and story of the landlord.

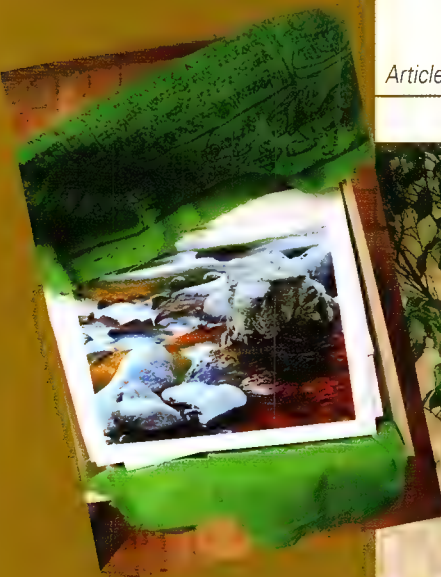
Dream Vacation

Chu Ka Hong refuses to make plans for the future. He believes that planning is futile in the face of change. Nonetheless, Chu wishes to open more chain stores. His current cafe is so small that it cannot accommodate his many friends. Chu hopes that he can find an ideal location near a university to build a spacious cafe for gathering and chitchat. He yearns for a simple life and the chance to live in a different city from time to time.

Chu Ka Hong is a man who enjoys living his journey.

Born in Hong Kong, Chu Ka Hong enjoys travelling and photography. When his cafe was closed in Lijiang, he established a business at Xinle Road of Shanghai. The new cafe was named "BOONNA", meaning coffee or wonderful drink in Ethiopian. Chu Ka Hong often held mini photography exhibition and film show in his cafe.





Sun Chengyi

Chasing the Light and Shade in Tibet

Sun Chengyi, a photographer in Shenzhen, visited Tibet myriads of times in the last 18 years, just to be close to this tranquil land of mystery. He said that nowhere on earth could bring him the feeling he got from Tibet. The spectacular and mighty panorama of this desolate land would move him to tears.

I couldn't understand how anyone could keep falling for the same place as long as 18 years, but Sun told me definitely that he would go to Tibet again, just to relive this feeling.

Born in Guangdong Province, Sun majored in medical science. He was assigned to work in Shenzhen as a doctor after graduation, but he was bored and worked for the Cultural Bureau a year later. After transferring from the medical science to art, he became fascinated with photography, and finally with the western regions.

"I've been to almost every part of China after I took up photography, but Tibet is still the place I'm most interested in. China is too vast and one can never cover all the places. Every photographer has to have a focus. I chose Tibet and the regions in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan

provinces where Tibetans live because I have a special feeling towards the land of the Tibetans."

People have different perceptions of Tibet. Some are fascinated with the religious atmosphere, some with the strong human touch, and some with the landscape. What is Tibet to Sun Chengyi?

"It is immense, unique and tranquil." These are the elements that attracted Sun to Tibet at least once every year.

Over the past 18 years, Sun has been fulfilling his dream by recording these abstract ideas with his camera and presenting them in tangible pictures to the readers.

Sun Chengyi said, "I often keep a large portion of darkness in my photo to give the land a sense of mystery. I believe the contrast in light is

the most inspiring, for it reveals the depth and immensity of the land. Sometimes it can move people to tears. I prefer not to put any people in my picture in order to show the desolation.”

The Contradiction of Refined and Popular Tastes

Sun Chengyi's new photo album on Tibet shows that he could balance the contradiction of refined and popular tastes well.

Since a friend of mine became fascinated

recent years has led to rapid tourist development. Sun said, “You can't protect a place by hiding it. What tourists and photographers can do is to minimise the environmental impact they might bring upon a place. On top of it, tourist development should only be carried out under the precondition of environmental protection.”

Sun Chengyi showed me his album of photos of the Guangwu Mountain in western Sichuan, which he had taken in autumn. Seeing the red leaves all over the ground, I could imagine that if it were a tourist spot, the leaves might have either



Born in Guangdong, he gave up his career as a doctor and became a photographer in his 20's. Over the years he has been to Tibet to photograph the landscape, in earnest pursuit of the immense and tranquil snow land.

about mountain climbing after his trip to Tibet, I asked Sun if he had ever thought about conquering the snow-capped mountains.

“No, because the snow mountains are sacred to me. They are the last few pure lands on earth. I'd consider myself a snow mountain admirer, not a conqueror, for I revere the sacred mountains on the snowland.”

The popularisation of mountain climbing in

been swept away by workers or treaded by numerous tourists. “Tourism has developed too fast. I could hardly recognise the place where I had visited a few year ago. That's why I have raced around the clock to make a record of the unspoiled attractions.”

Sun Chengyi told me that the scenery in Guangwu Mountain would change a lot in 10 years. “What I want is to keep its virgin beauty.”

Playing tambourine is one of Yao people's dance

Lee Yee Spreading the Culture of Yao



The Yao ethnic group, who lives in the area of southern China, is hospitable and candid in nature. Yet, under the pressure of commercialisation, some Yao people are experiencing an identity crisis. To preserve their culture, Lee Yee decided to move into these stockade villages and devoted herself to promoting Yao's drama and newsreel.

Lee is a woman who enjoys travelling and is interested in culture and especially drama. She went to Liannan Yao Autonomous County Guangdong, after attending an exchange programme group organised by Hong Kong Puxian Educational Promotion Association on the Christmas of 2000, and immediately fell in love with the Yao's culture.

With a population of 2,130,000, Yao people mainly gather around southern China, mostly in Guangxi, Hunan, Yunnan and Guangdong. Liannan County is located at the northwest of Qingyuan City and has a population of 150,000, among which more than 80,000 are Yao people.

Getting along with Yao People

Lee Yee found that she was often against the grain of mainstream and was in disagreement with the urban lifestyle of Hong Kong in most cases. She preferred to be with the Yao people, who lived among green mountains and had the milk of human kindness.

Lee Yee determined to further explore the Yao's culture.

At the Spring Festival of 2001, Lee Yee went to Liannan once again. She was arranged to stay at the home of director of local educational bureau at Youling. "They all treated me well, so I decided to stay and work as a volunteer teacher for half a year to teach drama." Lee Yee took charge of the grade two classes of Nangang Middle School. She often made follow-up visit in her spare time so as to learn the customs of Yao people, such as "playing tambourine", "chanting shayao" and "singing together".

The more she learnt, the more attached she felt towards the Yao culture. "I cannot tell you how grateful I am to my students. They are mature, caring and have high ideals. But they do not know how to realise their dreams. I believe their good nature is fostered by the Yao community."

Though Yao's culture was valuable, but Lee Yee said, "I am not strong enough to preserve a culture. I happened to meet some idealistic Yao youth, and I offered a little help and advice. They should cherish, appreciate and even share their



Left: Chat with Yao people

Right: Arranged Yao people to attend the sharing meeting and introduce Yao culture to Hong Kong youth

Lee Yee's Profile

Deeping in love with Yao culture, Lee Yee worked as a volunteer teacher of Nangang Middle School in Liannan Yao Autonomous County, Guangdong, and had organised children to form a mountainous troupe, and made a documentary film of their lives.

traditional culture. Culture is a continuous evolvement. How will Yao's culture be changed under the impact of modernisation? It is up to the Yao people themselves."

Organising Mountainous Troupe

Lee Yee produced three dramas within half a year and she led the children to perform in the neighbouring areas. "At the beginning, some children were afraid of being silly and did not understand drama at all. They detested speaking in their mother tongue and singing their songs, for they thought others would not appreciate them."

Lee Yee admitted that she only wanted to preach their culture and had neglected the feelings of her students.

Children's passiveness did not dampen Lee Yee's spirit. She treated them with her whole heart, walked half an hour for home visit and listened to their stories. Finally, the children were moved by their volunteer teacher from Hong Kong and learnt to appreciate their traditional culture.

"Do you think that they would understand what you have done?"

"Of course. They are proud of their culture. They are always cheerful whenever they sing and play tambourine together. As to romantic love, they think the modern love affairs are too rash. A young Yao man here will chant his love for a girl

and then wait for her response. He is not anxious to rush the relationship or to get intimate."

The Way of Yaoshan Youth

Lee Yee returned to Hong Kong after being a volunteer teacher for half a year and she thought of her students constantly.

"Two children ran after my bus on the day I leave. I still remembered their cries and wanted to hear from them again. We are still in touch and talked on the phone till now. Eventually, I will go back to see them grow."

With the funding from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Lee Yee went to Liannan once again in the summer of 2002. Her purpose was to make a documentary film for the children. "My students are just about to graduate from school. I want to record some parts of their life before they leave."

Her documentary film titled "Yao Youth" was shown in Hong Kong. In the mean time, Lee Yee arranged the two main characters (Fang Shixin and Pan Yalin) to attend the sharing meeting and introduce Yao culture to Hong Kong youth at her own expense. These two young men has been living in the deep side of the mountain for a long time and appreciate the chance to experience Hong Kong's culture that they had been learnt through TV programmes all along.

Article by Mickey Ching

Tian An Men Square in Beijing



Liao Weitang

Writing as

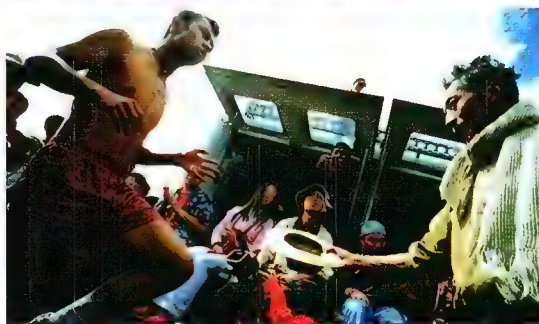
Not all writers would like to bend over their desk writing all day long. Liao Weitang chooses to stay in Beijing instead of Hong Kong not only because it is relatively cheaper to live there, but also more importantly, there live writers he admires and offer endless opportunities in publishing.

Liao has many titles to his name: poet, writer, photographer, chief art inspector, painter, orchestra member.... He loves Beijing, where many of his favourite writers once lived—Fei Ming, Bian Zhilin and Shen Congwen. He especially longs to go to the Tahoushen Village, northwest of the Xiangshan Botanical Garden, where Fei Ming formerly resided.

To Liao, the capital of China is the most ideal place for artists today.



Liao shows our journalist his photos taken when travelling



Left: Picture taken in Lijiang, Yunnan

whiling away my time in bars, bookstores, galleries, and trips." Aside from the unrestrained life of beer and skittles, Liao had a fruitful writing career.

"The bars in Beijing are quite different from those in Hong Kong. I went there to enjoy music, and the one I visited most was called 'River' at Sanlitun, where it often played my favourite ethnic music. I also planned to open a bar with my friends, so I took inspection tours everywhere. It's a pity that we ran out of money before we could start the business...."

He took pictures of all he saw in the Mainland and compiled them into a photo album titled "The Lonely China". The album captured Chinese people from all walks of life in close-ups, silhouette, or back view. These black-and-white pictures revealed the people who experienced the vicissitudes of life.

Apart from photography, Liao Weitang visited many places when living in Beijing, and had kept a travel journal. Everywhere he went, he had some friends in the literary circles to show him around. He enjoyed travelling to places with a rich heritage of history, literature and culture. He stayed in Beijing because of the writers he admired. He visited Harbin because of his love for

travels

"Unlike Hong Kong, Beijing is the cultural centre with a comparatively low standard of living. It also offers poor artists a myriad of opportunities in publishing.

Wild Days in Beijing

"I came to Beijing in 2001, enjoying the freedom I have never experienced before. I lived mainly on my previous literature award, often

Russian literature. His recent visit to Gannan in Sichuan was to find Tibetan Buddhist music.

Bidding Adieu to Beijing

Liao Weitang lived in Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Hong Kong, Taipei, and Paris before he settled down in Beijing; he ended up marrying there. Four years have passed, he was ready to move on.

"The Beijing people are not as cultural as I first imagined, and there are too much politics in the literary circles. It is getting harder to tell the difference between businessmen and writers."

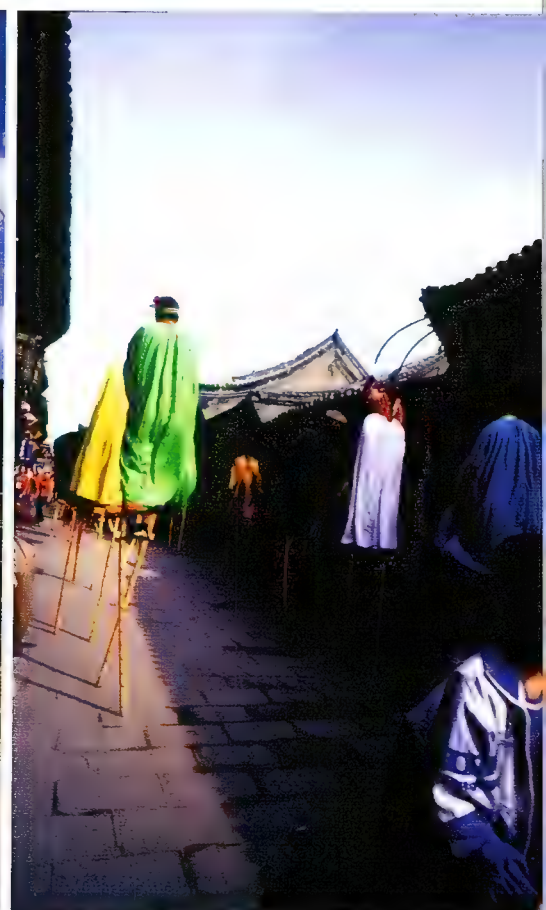
Liao Weitang is now working as a photographer. Still, he likes to meet those who genuinely love literature, and he will continue to write poems and books.

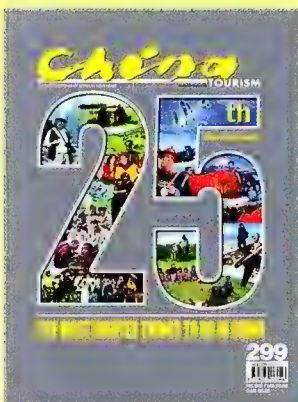
Liao Weitang's Profile:

Born in 1975 in Guangdong, Liao Weitang is a writer and photographer. He worked as manager of a bookstore in Hong Kong and edited Vision 21 in Beijing. Among the awards he won are Hong Kong Youth Literary Awards, Hong Kong Urban Council Chinese Literary Awards, China Times' First Literature Award for Poems, United Daily News' Grand Literature Award for Poems, United Literature's Award for New Novelists, and Huazhong World Literary Award in Malaysia. He has published poetry anthologies including *Eternal Night*; *Sinking with the Fish*; *A Corner of the Garden*; and *Drifting in the Melody of Accordion*. His photographs were shown in exhibitions of *Shaky Shadows*, *Bohemian China* and the art show of Western Beijing.

Left: Jiufen of Taiwan

Right: Shanxi Pingyao International Photography Festival in 2003





Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
25 Most Wanted Things to Do in China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badanjilin Desert: A Sea of Golden Silk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracking Giant Pandas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional Papermaking in Tantou	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ili - The Journey to Tianshan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel Tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions: _____					

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) _____

Address: _____

Country: _____

Age: _____ Occupation: _____ Number of trips to China in the last 5 years: _____

Where (how) did you first see *China Tourism*?

☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore

☐ Hotel Name: _____ ☐ Others _____

Main purpose for reading *China Tourism*?

☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business

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What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

Badanjilin Desert: A Sea of Golden Silk



Located in both west Alxa Right Banner and east Ejin Banner of Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, the 44,300-km² Badanjilin Desert is the third largest desert in China. In the boundless golden sea of sands, there are more than 140 lakes, which not only nourish the grazing lands but also form magnificent scenery.

The lakes in the dessert are formed by springs and underground waters, and are known as *haizi* by the locals. In the middle of Badanjilin Dessert, the lake water is as salty as seawater. However, an experienced herdsman can always find a spring by digging a pit by the lakeside.

Photos by Wang Jin Article by Hu Yang, Wang Jin





The lakes scattered in the desert bring life to this wasteland. Driving into the dessert, one can find many herdsmen's yurts with cattle and sheep grazing around. The scene of sand dunes surrounded by green pasture is amazing.



The herdsmen's families are the ideal place for travellers to eat and rest. Travellers can even try the Mongolian delicacies such as wine and mutton.



The strong wind in the dessert has created a chain of sand dunes, which range from 200—500m in height. They occupy 60% of the total area of Badanjinlin Desert. Travellers must go in teams. If one sinks in the sand dunes, there will be help around.



T ravel Tips

Transport: In Lanzhou, Gansu Province, there are train and long-distance bus going to Jinchang. The journey is 360 km. From Jinchang, there are buses going to Alax Right Banner, Inner Mongolia. The journey is 150 km.

Car Rental: The only mean to get into the desert is to hire a local jeep, since the journey required a highly experienced driver who knows the road well. There should be at least two cars going together. It takes three days for a round trip, and it costs around ¥1,500 to hire a jeep.

Best Travel Season: The best travel season is from late September to late October, when the temperature is mild.

The desert witnesses a trend of decreasing level of underground water, and most of the more than 140 lakes have already dried up. Nature is sending a clear message of desertification.



Tracking Giant Pandas

Photos & Article by Huo Yimen



When mentions panda, an adorable image would automatically surface: a chubby and tamed animal with a sluggish expression, slowly creeping around the forest to look for bamboo leaves. However, panda has a darker side that is not as well known.

Xiongmao is panda in Chinese. "Xiong" means bear and "mao" means cat, and panda indeed has the characteristics of both animals. Contrary to general conception, panda is both herbivorous and carnivorous. In fact, wild panda can be aggressive and dangerous.

1. Pandas were nicknamed "iron-eater" for its sharp tooth
2. Pandas do not like live in groups
3. The author spent six years in the Wolong Nature Reserve for photographing pandas



aggressive and carnivorous. In ancient times, they were nicknamed "iron-eater". Once, a panda gnawed into the water basin of our camp and there were only fragments left.

Pandas can run as quickly as a sheep, which is their favourite food. They would run after it, leap forward and bite off its neck. They even attack cows sometimes. Beef and mutton appear to be the favourite food of wild pandas, as the bones and nails of these animals can be found in their waste.

The workers in the natural reserve are going to attach a piece of wireless neckband to every panda for detection and protection. This is not an easy job however. In order to catch a panda, researchers would usually lure them in a big steel cage with roasted mutton. Once being caught, the panda will roar ferociously and jump around in the cage. The researchers can only get close to it and put on the band after the injection of narcotic.

The workers are frequently attacked by panda. Almost all the panda keepers suffer from attack at least once, with different levels of injury. Some keepers' fingers are being bitten off and some are bitten in the legs. Some unsuspecting visitors are attacked when playing with the animal. Therefore, a panda keeper will not get close to the animal without a protective fence. Food is usually sent to the pandas through an iron window.

Eleven years ago, a panda threw itself on a vet who was feeding it without warning. It bit her badly and the 22-year-old vet was soon dripping with blood. Fortunately a young keeper came to the rescue. Jumped into the cage, he tried his best to shove the animal aside until other people shot the panda with narcotic. Even though the vet's life was saved, but she was seriously hurt with cuts and bruises all over her body.

I also saw a photographer being attacked by a giant panda. One day in June of 1993, one of our photographers was chased by a giant panda during his duty. He was too scared when rushing down the mountain and stumbled over a stone. Unable to move, he squatted down on his heels, covering his head with his arms. The animal that was only one or two metres behind immediately pounced on him. I ran towards them with a thick wooden stick, beating against the animal's head and crying for help.



From 1987 to 1993, I was a wildlife photographer of the Wolong Nature Reserve in Sichuan. Living in an enclosed area of mountain and forest, I got the chance to observe pandas closely.

Wild Pandas

Unlike the pandas that live in zoos, wild pandas are



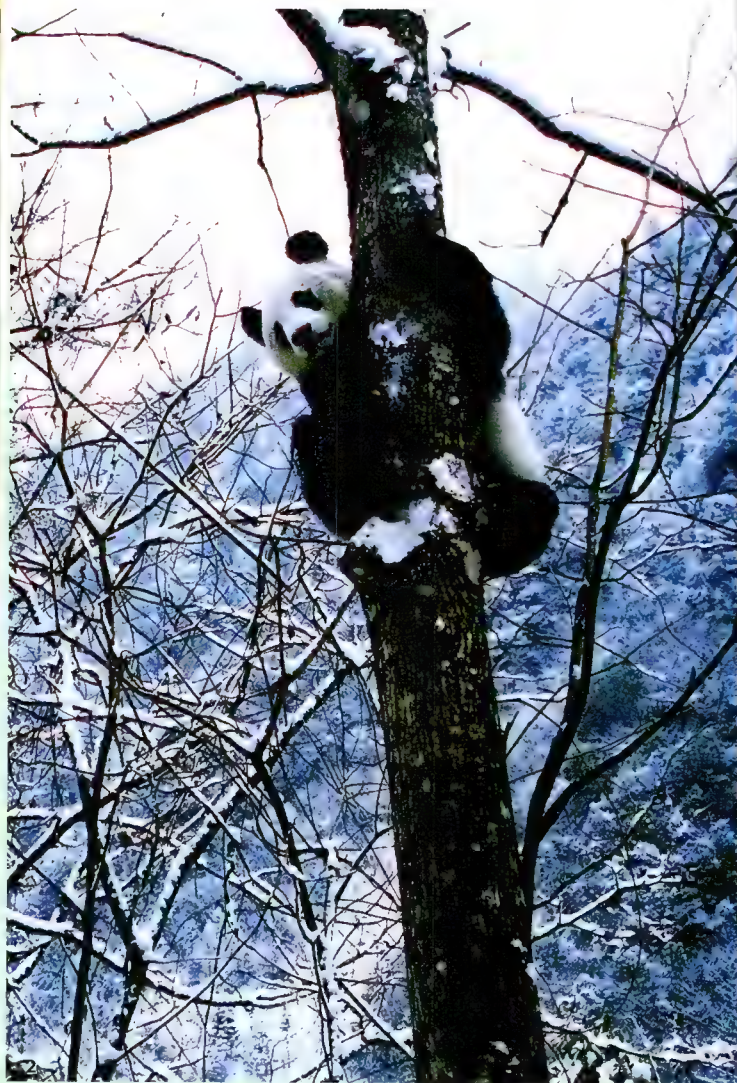
1. Wild pandas are carnivorous
2. Climbing tree is panda's born ability which could protect them from being attacked by other animals
3. Pandas have been well protected in the Wolong Nature Reserve

Mother-Son Bonding

Another story is about a mother panda with her son. One day, my companions and I found a little panda playing by a pool under a waterfall. It is what we were looking for since we were doing a research on young panda. When seeing us, the panda escaped quickly, but was finally cornered to the pool. Within a second, we heard a loud roar and found the panda mother standing on the peak opposite to the waterfall. The waterfall had a drop of about 30 m and was surrounded by precipitous cliffs. It was impossible for the mother panda to jump off the peak, since it was very likely that she would die by doing so. However, it was a long way for her to come along the mountain range to rescue her son. It seemed that we could capture the little panda easily.

At the moment, with a deafening crash the panda mother jumped into the pool, throwing up glittering splash. She soon sank into the water, but was then pushed to the bank by the waves and no longer moved. All of us looked at her silently, thinking she might be dead. A feeling of guilt washed over me.

Evening came and we still looked steadily at the panda mother. After a long period of time, she moved a bit. Tears immediately gushed from my eyes. I saw her shaking her head and then trying to raise her front feet. She stood up, but, weak



and limb, fell down immediately. She kept on struggling. Finally she stood firm, and seeing this, the little panda climbed off the tree and rubbed gently against his mother's body.

A moment later, the mother led her son away in steady steps.

Panic Attacks

It is not easy to photograph a wild panda. One needs to get as close to the target as possible, and at the same time, should have a reliable escape plan ready.



Wolong Nature Reserve

Located in Wenchuan County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, the reserve is about 120 km away from Chengdu, the provincial capital, and 50 km from Dujiangyan. As one of the few surviving habitats of giant pandas in the world, it is now under national protection and has been enlisted on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Giant Panda Research Centre is located at Hengaojing in the reserve, and the farm is well known for its protection and artificial propagation programmes. The reserve also has rich fauna and flora resources.

Transportation: It is a three-hour drive from Chengdu to Wolong. There are buses from Chengdu to Xiaojin County, departing from Ximen Bus Station at 6:40 A.M. everyday. Dujiangyan also has buses going to Wolong.

Admission: ¥10 (at main entrance) and ¥8 (for the Giant Panda Hall).



After running for 80 m, the panda got even closer. I could only run into the nearest bamboo forest, desperately wanting to hide myself among the leaves. I dared not stop to catch my breath and continued running for about ten minutes before finally got out of the panda's sight.


Five-Star Hotel for Panda

Wolong Giant Panda Nature Reserve has a vast stretch of primitive forests. It has a breeding farm, veterinary hospital and a giant panda research centre established here to look after giant pandas with illness.

Living in an individual room, these pandas' daily diet includes milk, corn buns mixed with luncheon meat, eggs and carrot, in a quantity that is enough for four to five grown-up people. Their body check-up involves advance equipments such as electrocardiogram and B-ultrasound apparatus.

Panda Lantian ("blue sky" in Chinese) is an international icon for peace, friendship and love. It is the result of the first successful artificial propagation at the research centre. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the former president of the World Wildlife Fund, once flew from Britain to visit it in the reserve.

The Impact of Modernisation

Despite its success, the accomplishments of the research centre are being overshadowed by tourist development and excessive cultivation. However, very few people seem to realise the impact of modernisation. If the animals become extinct one day, perhaps the population will finally understand how precious it is to have these lovely animals running around in the wilderness. 

One day, we found a giant panda eating bamboo leaves. Pleasantly surprised, I immediately hid myself behind a rock and had my camera ready for shooting. In order to get close-up shots, I moved towards the back of the panda. At a distance of about three metres away from the animal, I quickly adjusted the focus. When the panda stood on its rear feet and stretched its front paws to reach for the bamboo leaves, I pressed the shutter.

Little did I expect that the slight "click" would be enough to alarm the panda. It immediately turned around, staring at me while roaring with rage. I dashed for the quickest escape.



Baiyin Aobao is located in Dongujimqin Qi, Xilinhot League, Inner Mongolia. Its traditional Aobao sacrificial ceremony, a religious and recreational activities held in the sixth month of the lunar calendar, is the herdsmen's hottest event of the year.

Photos & Article by Du Dianwen

Aobao Ceremony

A Grand Event on the Grassland

Aobao is a Mongolian word meaning "mound". The Aobao, or mound of earth, was first used as the road sign during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in Inner Mongolia, Qinghai and Tibet. They later became the site for holding sacrificial ceremonies for the gods. Nowadays, many places continue to have their Aobao Ceremony every year.

Most Aobaos have a dome top and they are encircled by

willow branches. A pole with silk ribbons and streamers written with sutras is fastened in the Aobao. Very often, a bronze Buddhist statue or a sharp metal sword is buried in the mound. Aobao has different size, and it usually stands alone, but in some cases, it is grouped with seven or 13 others.

Baiyin Aobao is a small village situated 45 km north of

Dongwumuqin Banner, which is the remotest banner in Xilin Gol League. The banner covers a total area of more than 47,000 km². Among its 70,000 residents, over 40,000 are Mongolian. Due to its geographical location that hinders modernisation, the traditional Aobao Ceremony has been preserved.

One Chance for Each Family

Each village will pick a male representative to attend the ceremony; and for this year, there are 15 of them. The organisers are mostly from wealthier households, and they have to be approved by organisers of the previous year. Each family can only be the organiser once. Bude, a herdsman from Bayanhobol, said that he has been waiting for years to be the organiser.

The cost of the ceremony will be shared by all the organisers, and apart from this, each of them has to contribute ¥2,500 and two big goats. The money gathered will be the rewards for horseracing and wrestling; the goat will be served as sacrifices and food for guests.

Among the organisers, a man with high prestige and status will be elected as the head. The head for this year is the 50-year-old Humujilangtu from Huboqingobi.

A week before the activity was held, the family members of the organisers had moved to the site, having their yurts built in a line with the head's one in the west. The venue for the ceremony is on the open land between two major Aobaos (known as the Mother Aobao and Daughter Aobao), where big pots and pit-stoves for cooking mutton are found.

The Mother Aobao is situated on the bank of Quadam Lake. Standing one metre high, it has a diameter of four metres. The name of Quadam Lake literally means "white

alkaline lake". Measuring 200 m from east to west and 800 m from south to north, this oval lake is the largest of the 13 lakes in the area.

The Daughter Aobao stands on the top of a hill situated 1.5 km northeast to the ceremonial venue. It is a group of Aobaos built by stones, with 13 smaller Aobaos surrounding the main Aobao. The main Aobao is 1.5 m high, with a diameter of 12 m and the smaller ones are of the size of an ordinary grave.

There is no historical record on the origin of Mother and Daughter Aobao. It is believed that they are associated with a Mongolian primary religion. The Mother Aobao represents water, and the Daughter Aobao represents mountain. When people hold their sacrificial ceremony between the two of them, they pray for the protection from Nature.



1. Aobao sacrificial ceremony
2. The main Aobao is 1.5 m high, with a diameter of 12 m and the smaller ones around it
3. The family members of the organisers had moved to the site, having their yurts built in a line





The Elaborated Preparation Work

On the day after building the yurt, the head organiser and a lama led others to hold the incense burning ceremony at the Daughter Aobao. Everyone in the team was in "dele", a long Mongolian overcoat. When the team was bowing to the Aobao, the lama recited sutras and performed rituals for them. This took about half an hour, and marked the beginning of the sacrificial ceremony.

On the third day, joined by other male villagers, the organisers were busy in repairing the Aobaos. They took off the old poles and branches, cleaned the ground, secured the newly painted poles, and rebuilt the collapsed stone pile.

Sutras reciting was carried out on the fourth day in the head's yurt by five senior lamas in their eighties, who were from various monasteries in the area. They recited three times a day, and about half an hour each time, during which people would pay proper respect and present them with money, milk curd, mutton, butter and other gifts. The sutra chanting lasted until the evening of the sixth day.

On the sixth day, the second day of the sixth lunar month, six chefs were employed to cook mutton in six huge iron pots, including two 100-year-old ancient pots.

It is a Mongolian tradition to cook mutton before washing them, as they believe the meat will taste the freshest. Seven or eight goats were cooked in each old pot, and four or five in the new pots, apart from the one that made tea. After four hours of cooking, the mutton was put into a jeep's trunk. Part of it was taken out as sacrifices, another part was

for the guests, and the rest was for the herdsmen's families.

It was also the day for the herdsmen to decorate the Aobaos with willow branches and Fengma banners. The willow branches, cut from a remote land more than 50 km away, were as tall as a man and as thick as one's thumb. They were planted on the Aobaos, several for the big one, and one for the small one. The Fengma banner is a picture with horse patterns and sutras, and it can be found in five colours — red, yellow, green, blue and white. Each family had two banners on the west side of their yurts, and will would them on the Mother and Daughter Aobao respectively.

Thousands Herdsmen Gathered

The sacrificial ceremony for the Mother Aobao began at 3 P.M. on the second day of the sixth lunar month. Carrying their own Fengma banners, the organisers' families and the five lamas gathered at the site and in front of the Aobao. They burned incenses and prayed with the lamas. The herdsmen then planted their Fengma banners onto the Aobao and walked around it three times in a clockwise direction. While walking, the lamas recited sutras while people dumped goat milk and food on the Aobao and prayed.

The ceremony attracted more than 1,000 herdsmen from other counties. Some of them brought their own streamers and prayed, and some even washed their faces with the muddy water from the nearby quagmire, which they regarded as holy. The sacrificial ceremony at the Mother Aobao continued until 5 P.M.

The sacrificial ceremony for the Daughter Aobao started

at 4 A.M. on the third day of the sixth lunar month. The ceremony was similar to that of the Mother Aobao, except that the sacrifice mutton must be in perfect form, and in addition, there were a tube-like hat and a thangka picture fixed on the top of the flagpole. The ceremony reached its climax when the sun rose. Surrounding the Aobao, people read their prayers with a solemn expression on their faces. The ceremony lasted until 7 A.M.

The Grassland Olympics

The horse race competition for the youth began at 10 A.M. on the third day of the sixth lunar month. The course was

wrestlers. Most wrestlers wore clothes made of ox hide or canvas, which is called zhaodele in Mongolian. The attire has short sleeves but no collar. The top is loose, and the back has a bronze mirror carved with dragon, phoenix or other auspicious patterns. The trousers are in white colour with many folds; its kneepads are embroidered with flowers and birds. Wrestlers would also wear a silk belt and a pair of riding boots, and the winner would win a necklace made of colourful ribbons.

When the game began, the wrestlers matched into the venue and performed a eagle dance while the audiences cheered for them. The competition began after the draw of lots. The Mongolian wrestlers have terrific sportsmanship. When a wrestler falls, his opponent would immediately help him back on his feet.

Finally, after seven rounds of competition, Baiyin Jirigelang, a 21-old man from Erengobi Village won the



20 km long, from Samai Village to the Daughter Aobao. The 100 participants were local boys and girls aged from eight to 15; they all dressed up in their best ethnic costumes. The horses with braided manes were bathed and carefully adorned with colourful flags. Their tails were all tied up so that they would not brush others.

The horserace lasted for over an hour and in the end, Bayerto, a 14-year-old boy from Samai Village, won the championship.

The Wrestling competition started at noon. Among the 64 pairs of participants, the youngest was 18 and the oldest 40. Bude, aged 44, and Tegos, aged 40, were both herdsman



1. people walked around Aobao three times in a clockwise direction and dumped goat milk on the Aobao and prayed
2. Chefs were employed to cook mutton in six huge iron pots
3. Each village will pick a male representative to attend the ceremony

contest.

The award ceremony followed the games. The winners received a cash prize, a silver bowl, and a hada. The seven-day Aobao Sacrificial Ceremony was at last ended at 6:30 P.M.

The Silvery Glacier Hailuoguo

Photos & Article by Li Yiming

Hailuoguo, located in Luding County, Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, is not as popular as its neighbours Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong, which seem to be the must-seen attractions in the region. Yet the 1,080-m-high ice waterfall in the valley is the world's second largest — only 20 metres shorter than the one in Rocky Mountain of Canada. Chengdu to Hailuoguo is just a one-day drive. The marvellous mountain sceneries along the way have attracted many adventurous tourists.



Setting off from Chengdu at 6:30 A. M., I took the Chengdu-Ya'an expressway. The weather was holding but occasional drizzle, and there was little traffic. I covered 140 km in two hours before reaching Ya'an Bridge — the starting point of Sichuan-Tibet Road. Here the road is only wide enough for two cars, and most parts of the road have no curb. To the right of the road is a one-metre-deep gutter; and to the left, the clear Nyagchu River is surging into the valley with a pleasant melody.

As we got higher on the mountain, the road became steeper. Between the craggy rocks that flank the road, plants grow tenaciously. From the mountains, foaming torrents of water made a huge splash down the valley below. The peaks across the river are shrouded in clouds and mists.

Road Rage

The road began to cut through villages and towns after the



mountainous way. When passing through the Tianquan County after about 20 km, I saw a "318 national highway" road sign. This is the southern part of the Sichuan-Tibet Road. After we left the county town, the road stretched into a valley, snaking upward along a stream in about 40 m wide, with the narrowest part five metres astride, flowing with great momentum. Although not deep, the road falls from a great height and therefore runs rapidly. Even the noise from my car's engine was masked by the sound of water flow. There were also occasional cascades, large and small, falling down.

After another 30 km, I found that the road ahead was congested with traffic. A minibus slipped to the side of the stream of a dozen metres deep, and there was a crane slinging it up. Since there was no ambulance around, I doubted that there was any casualty. Despite the numerous narrow and steep turns, the road with a cement surface and metal guardrail crash cushions was in good conditions.

Before long, I had to come to a stop and found that both sides of the traffic flow had to share one shoulder of the road. We took turns following the instruction of a traffic worker dressed in shabby Tibetan-style clothes. Everyone was waiting patiently in lines. Suddenly,

a long siren was heard from a distance. Three jeeps led by a police van dashed to the front of the cars. A man in armed police uniform jumped out of the van, waved and shouted at the drivers, ordering them to move back. But how could the drivers do it, especially on such a steep slope? Seeing that it was an impossible task, the man urged the oncoming traffic to retreat, but none of the drivers moved. My car was the sixth in the line. I blasted the car horn for a

1. A close up of the glacier
2. The Sichuan-Tibet Highway
3. Mt. Erlang Tunnel

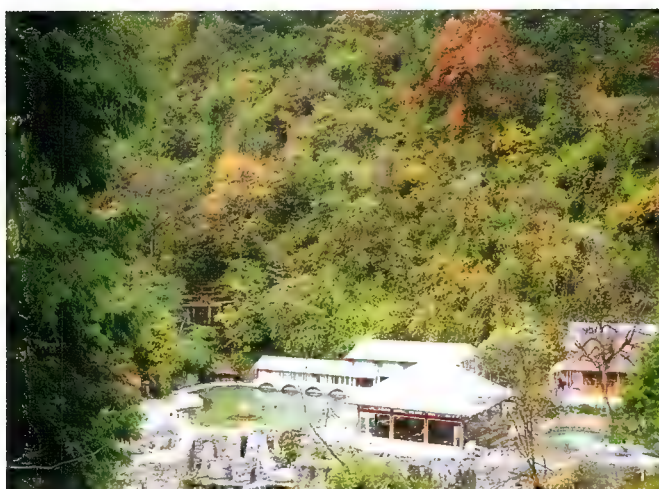
Hailuoguo's Profile

Hailuoguo is the glacier with the lowest altitude in the world. Although formed 1,600 years ago and categorised as a modern glacier, its thickest part is 300 m deep. It originates from the eaten slope of the main peak of Mt. Gangkar Riwo.

Hailuoguo has three characteristics:

1. Located at the foot of Mt. Gangkar Riwo, Hailuoguo has a magnificent view with the snow-capped mountain as the background.
2. The glacier, 2,850 m above sea level, is the lowest in the world. Its tongue stretches into the virgin forest, and there is a 1,100-m-wide ice waterfall dropping 1,080 m down to the ground, only 20 m shorter than the one of the Rocky Mountain in Canada, ranking second in the world.
3. Hailuoguo has a dozen of hot springs with the temperature ranges from 40°C to 80°C. The boiling hot spring in Campsite No. 2 is as high as 90°C.





minute or two to express annoyance, but found no one joining me.

Heart-warming Moments

The driver of the car ahead walked over and said to me quietly, "Young man, don't take offence at these guys or you will be in trouble." My heart sank and realised that it was better not to make any trouble. At this moment, the police van suddenly moved back, turned right, speeded up and ran on the wet cement road. The three jeeps followed quickly, leaving two deep ruts on the road. It happened so fast that the road builders were too shocked to move.

Finally we reached Mt. Erlang Tunnel. The road was now wider and the trucks in front of me stopped by the roadside. I parked my car before heading for the toilet. When I came back, I saw

about ten drivers gathered around my car. I was a bit afraid and hesitated. "Hey, young man!" I recognised that he was the driver who talked to me. "Come and get through the tunnel with us." His offer to accompany me warmed my heart instantly.

As I made haste to take photos, the drivers told me that the valley is always veiled in mist and cloud. When the vapour rises up to the mountain and meets with cold air, it condenses into snow. Driving is very difficult under such condition. It took about seven to eight hours to cover the 50-km drive over Mt. Erlong. If there were a landslide or accident, the drivers would have to stay on the mountain until the road re-opens. As safety measure, every car should have at least two drivers, and cars should travel in teams.

I drove through the tunnel smoothly and met another big valley, which is much deeper than the previous one. It is at least 1,000 m deep, and is extremely steep. Due to the low temperature, vegetations on the mountain are mostly brambles instead of woods, but the whole mountain looked lush green. The silvery Dadu River down the valley wanders into distance.

The condition of the road was very good. The surrounding view was nice and the traffic was not busy at all, because no vehicles going to Ya'an direction were allowed after 1 P.M. Driving downward, we reached the famous chain bridge across Dadu River. The swaying bridge is linked by six big iron chains of over 100 m long and less than two metres wide; it hangs 40 m above the river.

Hailuoguo Travel Tips

1. Hailuoguo can be reached by bus from Chengdu. Just get a bus going to Moxi, there is no need to hire a car.
2. Staying in Campsite No. 2 or 3 is advised. Campsite No. 2 offers a good view with many hot springs. The view of Campsite No. 1 is nice but there are too many modern constructions.
3. There are environment-friendly buses that run in a continuous loop among the three campsites. Check the schedule in advance and make sure you do not miss the last bus. The distance between Moxi Town and Campsite No. 1 is 15 km; Campsite No. 1 and

Campsite No. 2 eight kilometres; and Campsite No. 2 and Campsite No. 3 eight kilometres.

4. Walking from Campsite No. 3 to the glacier is strenuous. It is better to take a cable car to the viewing platform, and walk from there. The scenery is even better. Never try to walk back to the starting point of the cable car from the viewing platform or traverse the glacier.
5. There is another way to go through the virgin forest. Take a bus from Campsite No. 3 down for three kilometres, and get to the entrance of the forest. Along the way, there is a small lake,

strange-shaped rocks, various kinds of plants and a deep valley. There are road signs along the way, and a path that leads to Campsite No. 2. Walking from Campsite No. 2 down the path for about one kilometre, there is a 300-m-deep valley where three gorges and two streams meet.

6. Tours of three to four days from Chengdu to Hailuoguo are available. Moxi has better accommodation but there is no hot spring available. Tours normally charge from ¥300 to ¥600, and, as always, remember to bargain.

Hot Springs among Mountains and Forest

Crossed the bridge and drove for 46 km, we came to a town called Moxi. Located at the entrance of Hailuoguo Valley, Moxi is a small town with only one main street flanked by small stores selling yak and beef jerky, handicrafts and silver ornaments. It was only 4 P.M. after I strolled along the street. I hesitated whether to eat here or just head to the valley. Except in Campsite No. 2 where the meal was passable, food in other places in the valley was awful and expensive. So I decided to eat in town.

No cars were allowed to enter Hailuoguo, so tourists must take the environment-friendly bus in the scenic area. When I was eating, I met six Taiwanese who were planning to go to Campsite No. 2 right after dinner.

So I went with them and set off from Moxi right after the meal. Outside the town is a grit-surfaced slope, which falls for about 700 m down to the valley. A 30 m wide shallow river (formed by the melting glacier), flows swiftly with great momentum between huge rocks at the bottom of the valley. Crossing the valley, our car had to pass through a narrow wooden bridge of about 20 m long.

Finally we passed the bridge and drove up to a slope for about five kilometres. Another narrow valley came to our sights before we reached Campsite No. 1. There are some pretty little wooden houses and a small swimming pool, with hot springs scattered around in the open air.

It was a drive of eight kilometres before reaching Campsite No. 2, a much bigger site than Campsite No. 1. We found a dozen of hot springs scattered along the mountain. There is a hot spring with a tree in the middle, and another huge one that can hold up to 30 people.

A suspension bridge connects the two sides of the valley. After checking in, I went to the hot spring resort at once. The fatigue of travelling was gone after being soaked in the hot spring and embraced by the rich oxygenated air in the virgin forest.



Exploring the Virgin Forest

Springing out of the bed next morning, I put on my down vest and raincoat, brought my camera and jumped into the environment-friendly bus. There were a dozen of people in the car, including the six Taiwanese visitors I met yesterday. Campsite No. 3 is eight kilometres away from Campsite No. 2. Running on a sloped road covered by snow, the car was unsteady and slow. The journey took therefore about 40 minutes.

There are more than ten peaks around Mt. Gangkar Riwo with an altitude of over 6,000 m. From Campsite No. 3, one can see two of them. I waited, and at last the sun appeared, the deep night sky gradually turned dark blue. The two snow-capped peaks were surrounded by white clouds, with a golden glimpse of sunlight.

From Campsite No. 3 via the virgin forest to the glacier is about an hour walk. When I was walking, I heard a deafening cracking sound and then a

huge bang, which made my heart beating even faster. I turned around and found a bunch of branches fallen on the ground.

When I walked out of the dense forest to the glacier valley, the sky was clear and bright. Covered by a layer of dirt, the glacier looked grey, and only the clefts were clean and white. Not far down the valley lay the glacial tongue. I could hear occasional rambling sound of ice falling down, and the Taiwanese travellers all got out from the forest and looked delighted.

We walked back to Campsite No. 3 and took the cable car up to the viewing platform to see Mt. Gangkar Riwo, king of mountains in Sichuan. A gigantic icy waterfall stood no more than three kilometres before me!

1. Hot spring resort in Campsite No. 3
2. A view of the glacier from Moxi
3. Mt. Gangkar Riwo

- 1) Zhong Haixian, a local painter, making New Year Picture
- 2) The bamboo should be placed in water for a month to be softened
- 3) Farmers collecting bamboo to make paper

Tantou is the kind of small town that is not even marked on most maps. Surrounded by a boundless sea of bamboo in Hunan Province, it is the home of various kinds of paper products made by traditional methods. Among them, the most famous product is the fragrant powdered make-up paper, which has a natural aroma that can help refine the skin's texture.

Workshops in Tantou continue to adopt the several-hundred-year-old papermaking methods, which makes this tiny town appear to be an ancient papermaking museum.



Traditional Papermaking in T

Photos & Article by Lao Hou

Tantou, located in Longhui County, Hunan, is surrounded by bamboo groves. Owing to such rich natural resource, Tantou had become a famous papermaking town for the past several hundred years since the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1638). During the flourishing period, the town produced papers of all kinds. The white, fine and tenacious Yuban paper was one of the famous products; it was selected as a tribute to the

emperor during the Qianlong reign (1711-1799) of Qing Dynasty.

Ancient Technique Only

The tools for papermaking are simple and primitive. To make coloured paper, each worker needs only a desk, a coir brush, a jar containing dyes, and a kang (a brick-bed which can be heated



TANTOU

from the inside). Each worker has a pile of paper on his desk and he paints according to the routine. This piece of paper will be taken to the kang for drying.

Apart from painting, the local people also make New Year Pictures on different types of paper. Some of them are wax-glossed or ground; others have patterns pressed, printed, carved, gilded or pasted on.

Tantou New Year Picture has eye-catching folk art designs and striking colours. Its themes are different in varieties, but most of them are based on myths, tales, and novels. One of the representative works, Mouse's Wedding, is not only humorous but also very thought provoking.

A New Year Picture would usually use seven or eight colours, including red, rose, yellow, green, blue, black and gray. Each colour needs an individual engraved woodblock for printing. The main woodblock that prints the colour black has a bold carving style, and its lines are soft but powerful.

Different from New Year Pictures of other places, Tantou New Year Pictures cannot be directly printed on paper. The rough fabric of the paper has to be refined into even and smooth. Some white powder will be brushed on the paper before having the design painted. This way, the colours will appear to be richer and heavier.

The printing of New Year Picture requires a highly sophisticated skill. Two or three prints are made as trials. The picture will then be printed from light to dark. There are strict requirements for paper-fixing, position-setting, re-printing. The thickness of the paint should be carefully controlled; the direction of brushing and the strength used to stretch the paper are also important.

The last step is to draw the face of the figures. The seemingly simple task of drawing eyebrows, beards and rouges turns out to be tricky, especially when the master has to make hundreds of duplicates.

In the past few years, however, the numbers of New Year Picture workshop reduced dramatically. Many experienced masters have become farmers to make a better life. Zhong Haixian, who has been making New Year Picture for over 60 years, said that in the high time, there were about 100 workshops in Tantou. The number reduced to seven the year before, and again, to three last year. This year, there is only his workshop left.

Fragrant Powdered Cosmetic Paper

Fragrant powdered make-up paper, Tantou's specialty, is white in colour with light fragrant. The local believe that it can refine the skin's texture. It has been exported overseas for about 100 years and Tantou remains the only producer so far.

Who made the first fragrant cosmetic paper?



1) A thick layer of wet paper waiting to be dried
2) Drying the paper in the "kang"
3) Traditional papermaking workshop



4) Paper products to be exported
5) Digging the "stone mud" is a hard job



More than a century ago, a local man named Li Shuangxi found a strange material in the rock crevices in the hill. It is light green, harder than mud but softer than stone. Li took out a handful of it and rub it in his hands. To his surprise, the material turned to fine white powder. He therefore brushed the powder on yellow papers and had them whitened; and these whitened papers earned him a fortune. The locals later named the material "stone mud".

Daxingchang Papermaking Workshop was the first workshop in Tantou to introduce stone mud by brushing the mud on a kind of thick paper to make envelopes. The product became famous in the country and Tantou became an important

trade town ever since.

Some brave Tantou girls eventually applied the mysterious white powder onto their faces. Their skin was whitened, more refined, and less oily. A Shanghai trader, Dacheng Company, thought it was a good business and therefore started an investment. A better formula was used to produce the whitening powered cosmetic paper. Packed like a small book, and chopped with a stamp "Tantou, China", the papers were export to Western Europe, Japan, Korea and southeastern Asia. This business is still growing nowadays.

Some Japanese scientists once studied the components of the powder and found that there were many minerals in it that could nourish the

Scenic Spots in Tantou

▶ Tantou Mud Bath Villa

The stone mud produced in Tantou is good for the skin. It can help improve blood circulation and rejuvenate skin. Tantou Mud Bath Villa, which occupies a land of more than 13 ha, can be reached from the county on foot. It offers mud bath that has stone mud as their main component.

▼ Tantou Middle School

There are some classic New Year Pictures painted by the art students in the playground. It is a quick way to know about New Year Picture. The fine art teacher is helpful and willing to answer questions.



Daxingchang Papermaking Workshop

Founded in Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Daxingchang Paper Shop is the first workshop in Tantou to introduce stone mud into their product. The workshop is now a museum displaying coloured paper and New Year Pictures.

▼ Tantou Old Town

The old town of Tantou is a good place to meet the local and explore the West-Hunan style architecture. Buildings there are well-preserved and New Year Pictures can be found everywhere.




skin. They tried to replace such minerals with chemical substances but failed.

The stone mud is rare. Even if a stone mud mine were discovered, the exploration would be very difficult. Li Qingping, a farmer at Zhuanqu Village, is from a mud-mining family who have engaged in this business for three generations. In the past, the working condition was harsh. The workers had to crawl into the deep and dark cave with an oil lamp as the only means of illumination. Very often, they had to dig the stone mud by lying on the cold and wet rocks, and could obtain only a little bit after a day's hard work.

In the golden age of papermaking, there were two or three dozens of stone mud mines and more

than 200 miners. Nowadays, the mine owned by the Li family is the only one left and the resource is drying up. Many domestic and international institutes and research centres are trying to find new sources without success.

Keep the Tradition Alive

Despite the declining papermaking industry, the local government is determined to develop tourism under the theme of New Year Picture. Tantou New Year Picture has drawn attention from people of various backgrounds, and hopefully this traditional folk art can be preserved. 

Travel Tips

Transport

Express bus from Changsha to Longhui is available, and the journey takes two to three hours. From Longhui you can take a minibus to Tantou.

Accommodation

Though hotels are not available in Tantou, travellers can stay at a restaurant for the night, which usually has a couple of rooms reserved for travellers. Hongqi Restaurant is recommended. It is run by a friendly family and serves excellent meals. Contact: Yi Youyuan, 13574929955

Food

The local flavour is salty and hot. A local delicacy, pig blood and bean curd ball, tastes very special.

Notes

Tourism is not yet well developed in Tantou and the facilities are limited. The best way to explore the town is through local people, who can show you around the town. Tantou is a safe place and its people are candid and honest.



Photos by Zhao Chengan, Shi Baoxiu and Li Xueliang. Article by Shi Baoxiu

The Journey to Tianshan



The spectacular Tianshan Mountains provide a stunning backdrop for Ili. (by Zhao Chengang)

As the saying goes, "One can neither comprehend the grandness of the world nor the beauty of nature without visiting Xinjiang." In Ili, you can find not only horses of best breeds but also all sorts of product such as rice, fruit and spice.

How has Ili become "a promised land"? According to the plate tectonics theory, the movements of the plates gave birth to the astonishing mountain ranges of Tianshan million of years ago. The forces of nature also

created the graceful valleys and basins in the west end. A warm and humid Ili, full of vegetation and rivers, was thus formed.

The Ili Valley is enclosed by the mountain ranges in the north and the south Xinjiang. The melting snow from the mountain becomes numerous streams and the sources of the three rivers, Tekesi, Kunse and Kashi. It is common to find animals like cattle, goats and horses roaming on the grassland on both sides of the rivers.



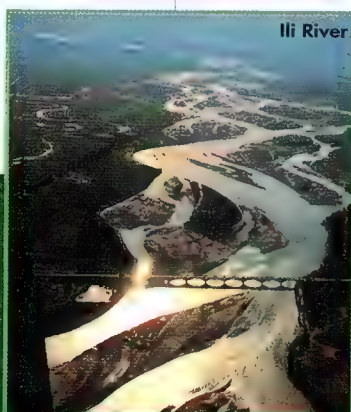


In April and May, spring comes to the Ili countryside and wild fruit flowers are blossoming vigorously. (by Zhao Chenguo)





In winter, the area around the Kunse River is a paradise of shining white. (by Zhao Chengan)



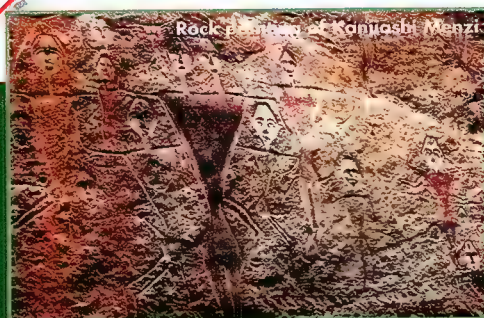


Kazakh sheep farm



Kazakh man

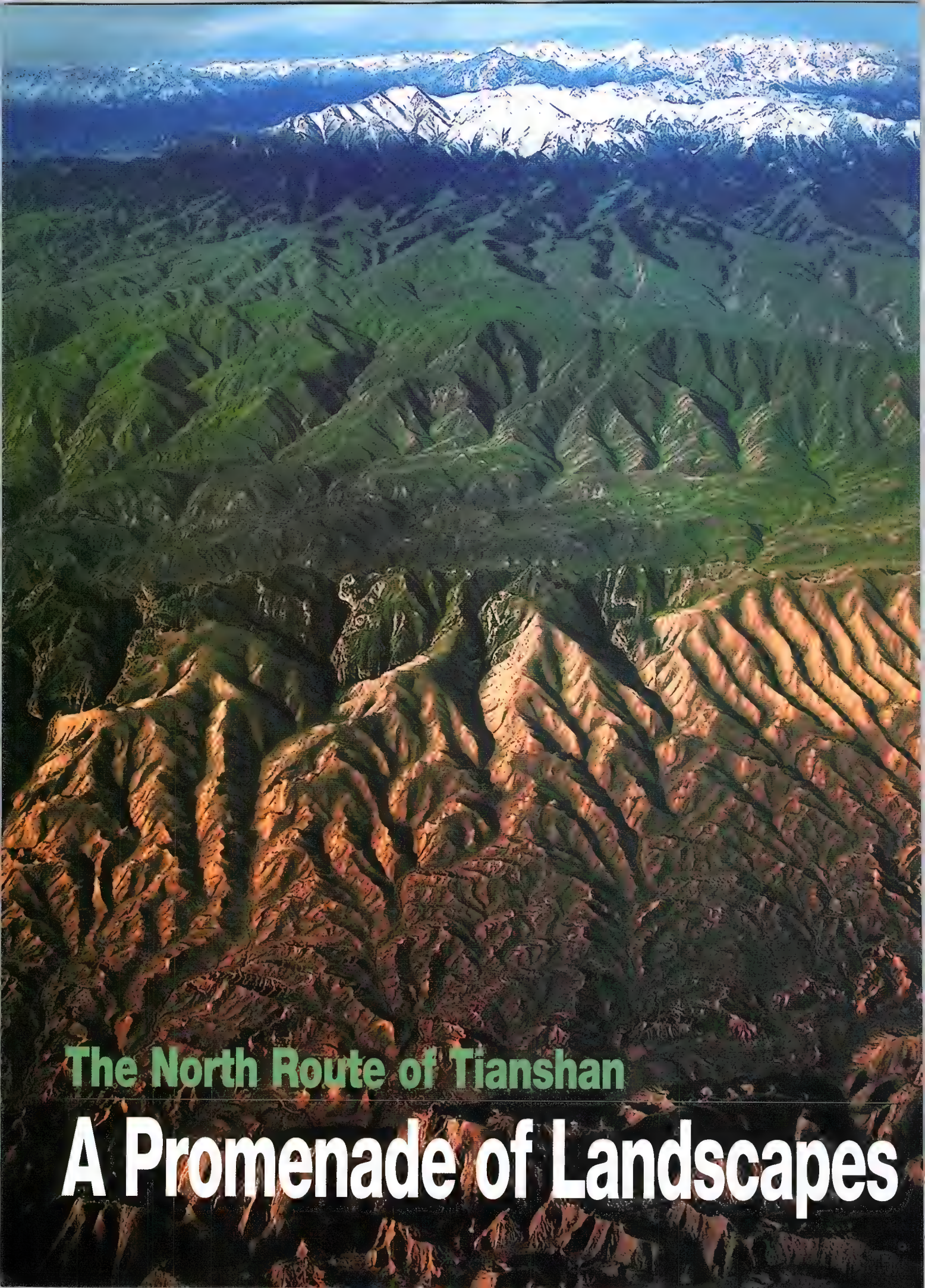
Juggar Basin



Rock painting of Kangjashii Menzi



The Dam in landscape of Guanyingou



The North Route of Tianshan

A Promenade of Landscapes

At 8:00 a.m. on the 28th of May, we got on a jeep and left Urumqi. We were heading to the west at full speed on Highway 312. On the two sides of the highway, we could see the sprouts of various kinds of crops. In other parts of China, there are clear demarcations between fields, but this area is composed of hundred-year-old square fields divided by white birch lines. The chess patterns extend from the bottom of Tianshan Mountains to the south end of Gurban Tonggut Dessert in Junggar Basin.

A Story Under the Red Rocks

Having passed Changji, our jeep entered the

highway in Hutubi. We followed the old route of Highway 312 and arrived in Dafeng Town. We then moved southward to Tianshan Mountains. After Quergou Town, we got in a westbound stony lane that is parallel to Highway 312. The stony road was a secret path for Chinese tanks when the military tension escalated between China and Russia in the last century. Now that the two countries have reconciled with each other, the path has become a special scenic spots of Xinjiang and is renamed Provincial Highway 101. While passing by a mountain, we were amazed by the gorgeous landscape before us. The long and lofty mountain range of the Danxia landscape looks like the Great Wall, and stretches from the east to the west lying on the central part of northern Tianshan Mountains. South of "the Great Wall", there is a snowy mountain peak of Tianshan. The peak spans 1,500 km, east to west, and 200 km south to north. The mountains below the peak are the green spruce trees and other plants. Hillocks are erecting in the north from the "Great Wall", and vegetations become rare in the further north, as the altitude is even lower there.

The Magnificent Landscape and Mountains

Thin plates of crust were constantly moving over the softer material below, steadily changing the pattern of the earth's surface during the late Permian Period (250 to 290 million years ago). The mountain ranges of Tianshan were first formed at that time. In the late Cretaceous-Palaeogene, the further movements of the plates created large cracks and formed the Tarim Basin, the Junggar Basin and the Ili



Left: The altitude variation on Tianshan creates different kinds of landscapes. (by Zhao Chengan)

Right: Looking from above, the rivers on Tianshan look like a bunch of Chinese cabbage. (by Zhao Chengan)

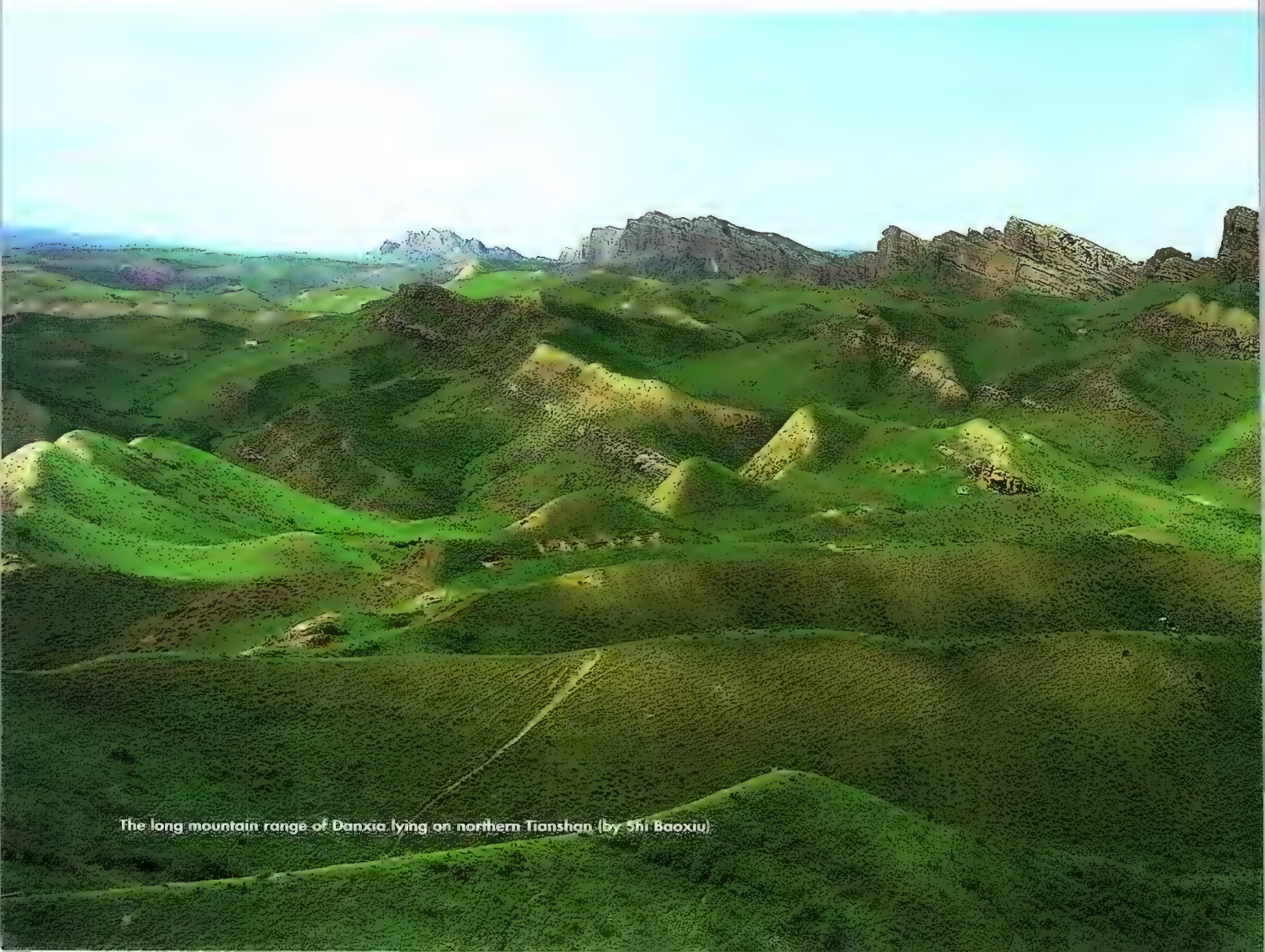
Valley. The long mountain range of Danxia landscape before us was the red sandstone layer resulted from those plate movements.

Later when we entered the Qingshui River Valley and the Guanyin Valley of the scenic landscape in Danxia, we were again amazed by the marvellous nature. The area is composed of the rocks from the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods.

The continuous re-shaping of landscapes by nature is always mind-boggling. Canyons formed by heavy rains and flooding are one of nature's masterpieces. When we were heading westward along

Provincial Highway 101, we crossed many rivers, including Hutubi River, Quergou River, Taxi River, Qingshui River, Manasi River and Kutun River. Each river has its unique features. What impressed me most were the lofty banks of Anjihai River in Wusu City. There are countless vertical lines on the layers of greenish grey sand created by rains over a long period of time.

Along the route, we often came across with landscapes caused by rain erosion. However, the rugged surface of strong granite, also a result of erosion by rains over millions of years, was harder to



The long mountain range of Danxia lying on northern Tianshan (by Shi Baoxiu)

find on our way. Bole City, situated on the west end of the Tianshan's south route, is where more bizarre landscapes of granite can be found.

Ancient Rock Paintings on the Cliffs of Danxia

Rock paintings of ancient times were hid somewhere in this extraordinary landscape. When we came to a village called Kangjiashi Menzi, my companion told me that the paintings were just in the

valleys. At first we thought that the paintings were taken care by nobody. But when we passed by a few huts, the rattles of our jeep had alerted a Kazakh girl. She smiled timidly and showed us the five fingers of her left hand, meaning ¥5 for admission fee. Along the road to the paintings, we could tell from the dotted lines left by vehicle wheels that there had been no visitor for at least half a month. The paintings were craved on a fan shaped rock at the bottom of a cliff there. They were enclosed by steel railings but there were no security guards around. The more than a hundred craved human images were composed of



simple lines. Due to long period of weathering and rain erosion, some images were blurred and the bottom part of the painting began to peel off.

The carved human figures were up to two metres tall while the heights of the shorter ones were less than 20 cm. At first I could hardly tell the sexes of those figures, but then I realised that the waist of a female was slim and the males had a long rod between their legs. Scenes involving sexual intercourse were also depicted in the paintings.

According to the archaeologists, such work might have done by the Sezhong people who lived there about 3,000 years ago. Could the nomadic Sezhong people be the ancestors of the present Kazakh people? It seems that there is no definite answer to the question yet.

Culture and Nature in Harmony

After we had entered the northern Tianshan, we were in the turf of the Kazakh people. Since the ethnic group make their livings mainly by raising cattle and sheep, they must live in harmony with the mountain that provides vegetation.

In the Quergou Valley, we could see many Kazakh people's cemeteries on the hillside beside the highway. Their styles are unique, and interestingly enough, the name of the village here is "Kazakh Grave". Rectangular graves can be seen everywhere on the hillside. Most of them are built with pebble stones. The tombstones are on the fronts and the engraved epitaphs have become blurred. The newer graves are mostly on the bottom of the hill slope. The graves are built with bricks or enclosed by steel railings. The steel symbols of the "Crescent" on the graves give people a sense of solemnity. On the other hand, there are also newer graves that are built of pebbles and mud, which are in harmony with the natural surroundings.

Then we visited a Kazakh cemetery in Ziniquan Village. The cemetery might be very old as some of the pebbles were gone. Another graveyard near the main

road has a large entrance and it looks like a modern public cemetery. No matter how old or new, how luxurious or simple are these graves, all of them are situated on the lofty slopes with the snowy peaks of Tianshan as their backdrops. The Kazakh people would be with the mountain eternally. Whenever they pass by the cemeteries, they would jump off from their cars or horsebacks, kneel down and offer prayers.

Along the path on northern Tianshan, we had encountered many Kazakh people who were leading their cattle and sheep to the pasture. I discovered that Kazakh men love riding up to the hilltops and having bird's eye views of the landscape. The snowy peaks of Tianshan Mountain and the sky formed a picturesque scene. Kazakh people are content with simple necessities of life and they rarely stray from their philosophy. They cherish the forests and pastures and never exploit them for wealth. The Kazakh people are wise enough to refrain from over pasturing.

Snow Got into the Way

Now the road for national defence is a popular spot for photographers. Local government officials and private developers have found a great opportunity for making profits in the area. They have built villas

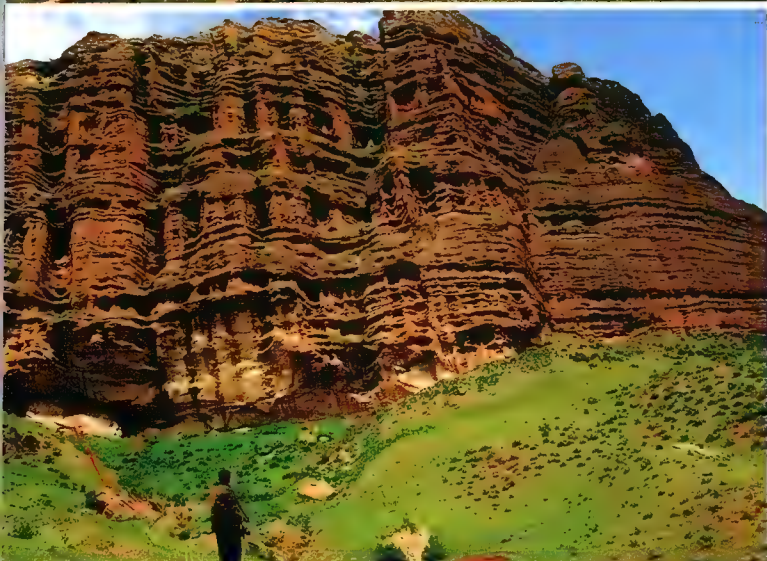
Upper right: Beside the highway, the caves composed of bizarre rocks are like those in the movie Indiana Jones (by Zhao Chengan)

Middle left: The graveyards of Kazakh on the lofty hillside and the snowy peaks of Tianshan (by Shi Baoxiu)

Middle right: The painting was allegedly the spontaneous work of Sezhong people about 3,000 years ago (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower left: The ancient rock paintings on the Cliffs of Danxia (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower right: Born to love Nature, Kazakh people would never do any harm to the environment (by Shi Baoxiu)






and developed tourist spots on both sides of Highway 101. The Bayin Valley is a large-scale development project in this area of large forests, high mountains, and magnificent canyons. However, the area is a bit overdeveloped and the architecture style is awkwardly sumptuous. Some developers have built a main road across the prairie full of some sharp coloured European houses that totally clashes with the surroundings. All these have disrupted the beauty and harmony of the natural environment.

After leaving the Quergou Valley, we came to the Kuitun River Valley. It is the intersection of provincial Highway 101 and national Highway 217. Highway 217 is also known as "Du-Ku Highway" because it is a route across Tianshan that connects Dushanzi and Kuju in southern Xinjiang. We intended to go 300 km southward and get to Ili directly via Highway 217. Nevertheless, once entering the mountain area, we learnt that the hilly path was too dangerous.

Due to the rugged surface and the loose soil, fallen rocks were everywhere along the road. At one section, the rockslides caused by heavy rains had blocked the road. We cautiously moved forward on the newly reconstructed path. Throughout the 30 km long journey across the canyon, I could find no peace in my heart. But after that, we finally arrived at the vast snowy plateau on the mountain. The temperature

dropped drastically and we put on our windbreakers and wool sweaters. The layer of snow on the road surface was getting thicker and we moved upward on the snow.

Our jeep soon stuck in the snow. We had no choice but to put some padding under the wheel to make it less slippery. We moved along for another half a kilometre but no more. The higher we went the thicker the snow is. It was 10 km away from the Haxilagen Tunnel on the peak, but we were forced to turn back. It was 8:00 p.m. and we could not delay anymore because the temperature might fall below -10°C as it was about 3,000 m above sea level. We had to turn back to Dushanzi and headed to Ili via Highway 312. 

Left: The surface above the snow line of Tianshan Mountains, which is 4,000 m above sea level, is covered by snow throughout the year (by Li Xueliang)

Lower left: In early June, the area below the Haxilagen Tunnel was still covered by spring snow (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower right: Passing through the passage on the Nalatigao Mountain. The snow was three metres thick (by Shi Baoxiu)



It started to rain when we had left the dangerous canyon. I was always in full alert for fear that the heavy rain would cause rockslides. I took a deep breath after leaving the mountainous area. But it was raining even more heavily and the visibility level was below 50 m. The driver said it must be snowing heavily on the peak and luckily we had turned back from there.

Sayram Lake: Nature's Masterpiece

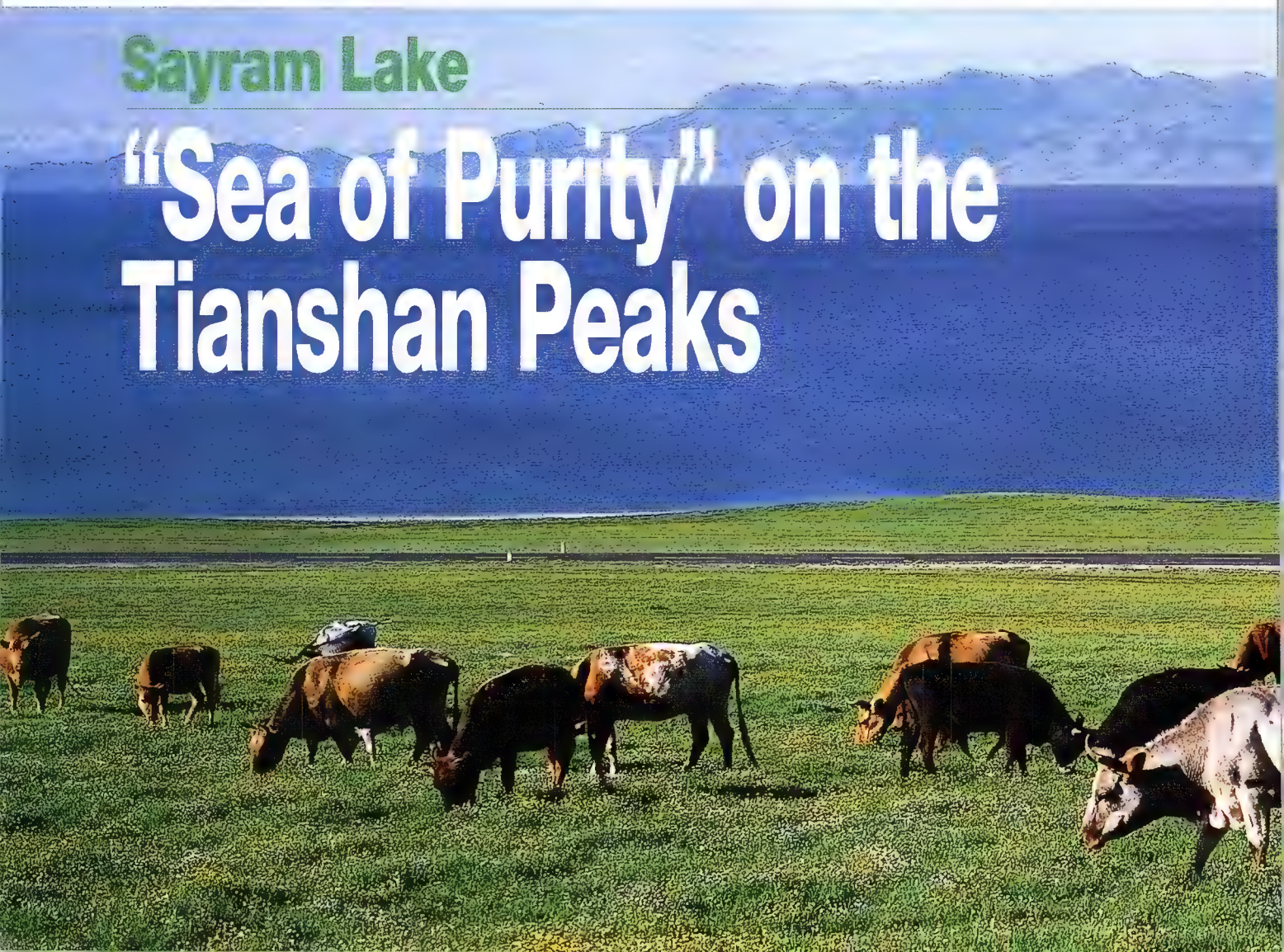
On the second day, we continued our journey along Highway 312, which had become a mess because of another highway construction. Due to the messy road condition, we could only arrive at the Qinghe County at

noon. In the afternoon, having past Daheyuanzi Town, our car started to climb up the mountain. Only drivers can tell the roughness of the 80 km long slope while passengers onboard usually do not notice anything. The altitude is continuously rising throughout the way from Wutaizi to Santaizi. Nevertheless, this is the main passage leading to Tianshan. The traffic between the East and the West in ancient times was heavily depended on it. In the Mongolian language, "Tai" means "courier station". When we reached Santaizi, we saw the large lake in western Taishan — namely Sayram Lake.

"Sayram" is a Kazakh word, meaning "make a wish". The Chinese people there call the lake "Santaizi Hai". Since it is close to the west end of northern Xinjiang section of the ancient Silk Road, travellers at that time would see it as a land of spirituality. I was stunned when seeing Sayram Lake, because I had seen

Sayram Lake

"Sea of Purity" on the Tianshan Peaks



deserts only on the way from Duzishan to here. When I saw the shimmering blue water, I could not help but exclaiming with joy. The sacred lake is 2,072 m above sea level and its area is 457 km². A long time ago, the earth gave birth to the mountain ranges and basins. Then the melting snow from the peaks filled the basin and thus a vast lake was born. The name "Sea of Purity" was no exaggeration. I could see clearly the stones on the lake bed near the shore, which was more than 10 m below the water level.

Fascinating Scenery on the South Lakeside

We had lunch in the hotel restaurant on the lakeside. Feng, our driver, suggested to have white globefish and

red trout from the lake for lunch. We ordered a dish of steamed globefish for about ¥70. It was fresh and tasty. Feng said if it was served raw, the meat would be even more tender and delicious. These fish are imported from Siberia of Russia, and the cold and deep water of the Sayram Lake is most suitable for the species. After lunch, we went sightseeing on the lakeside. It was like a paradise. The melting snow and the green trees on the ranges surrounding the lakeside were so beautiful. The setting sun was shining tenderly on the sea of flowers on the hillside while cattle and horses were enjoying their meals on the green.


In between the spruce forest and the pasture were some cedar trees, which looked like crawling dinosaurs. They were less than one metre tall but their branches stretched out like the aliens' limbs in sci-fi horror movies.



Sayram Lake is located at an altitude of 2,072 m. (by Shi Baoxun)

Apple Trees in Guozigou and Cuisines in Lucaogou

Having said goodbye to the Sayram Lake, we moved along Highway 312 and could pass through the Guozigou of Tianshan easily. While thinking about the rugged surface of the Du-Ku Highway, I could imagine how difficult it would be for people back then to travel through Tianshan. Relatively speaking, the slopes here were much gentler. Behind the mountain pass, we could see steep summits covered by spruce and on the other side there is a huge canyon. The famous Guozigou scenic spot is around the corner. Moving along the winding road to the bottom of the canyon, we could see the area was packed with even more spruce trees, which hid the soil below them. Going further south, the path between the canyon cliffs is becoming wider while the surface is getting less steep. There are some mixed forests. Feng said there used to be lots of apple trees. But now all the fruit trees had been cut down.

Getting out of the forest, we came to the vast flat land of the Ili Valley. First we went to the jolly town Lucaogou. Both sides of the road were packed with Islamic food stalls ran by Muslims of the Hui and Uygur ethnic groups. The stalls were well decorated and the tables and chairs were covered by vibrant cloth. The noodles, mutton and rice were quite delicious and inexpensive. We had dinner in one of the stalls. Travellers can hardly resist the temptation of the mouth-watering food. 



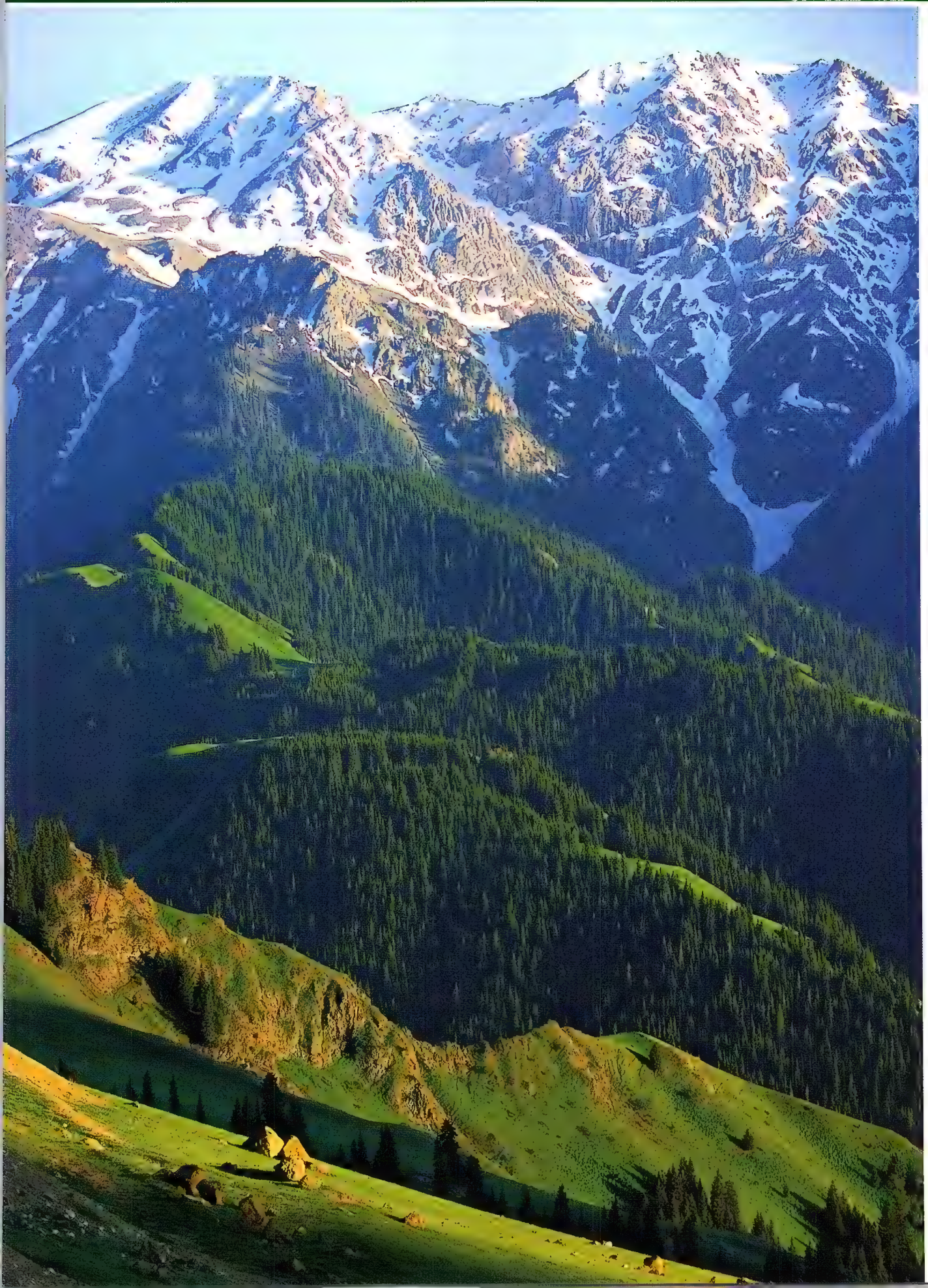
Upper left: Pasture and spruce forest are found on the south side of Sayram Lake (by Shi Baoxiu)

Middle left: A pasture on the highland of Guozigou (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower left: The white globefish live in the deep water of Sayram Lake (by Shi Baoxiu)

Right: Over the mountain pass, there are the gorgeous ranges of Guozigou (by Shi Baoxiu)







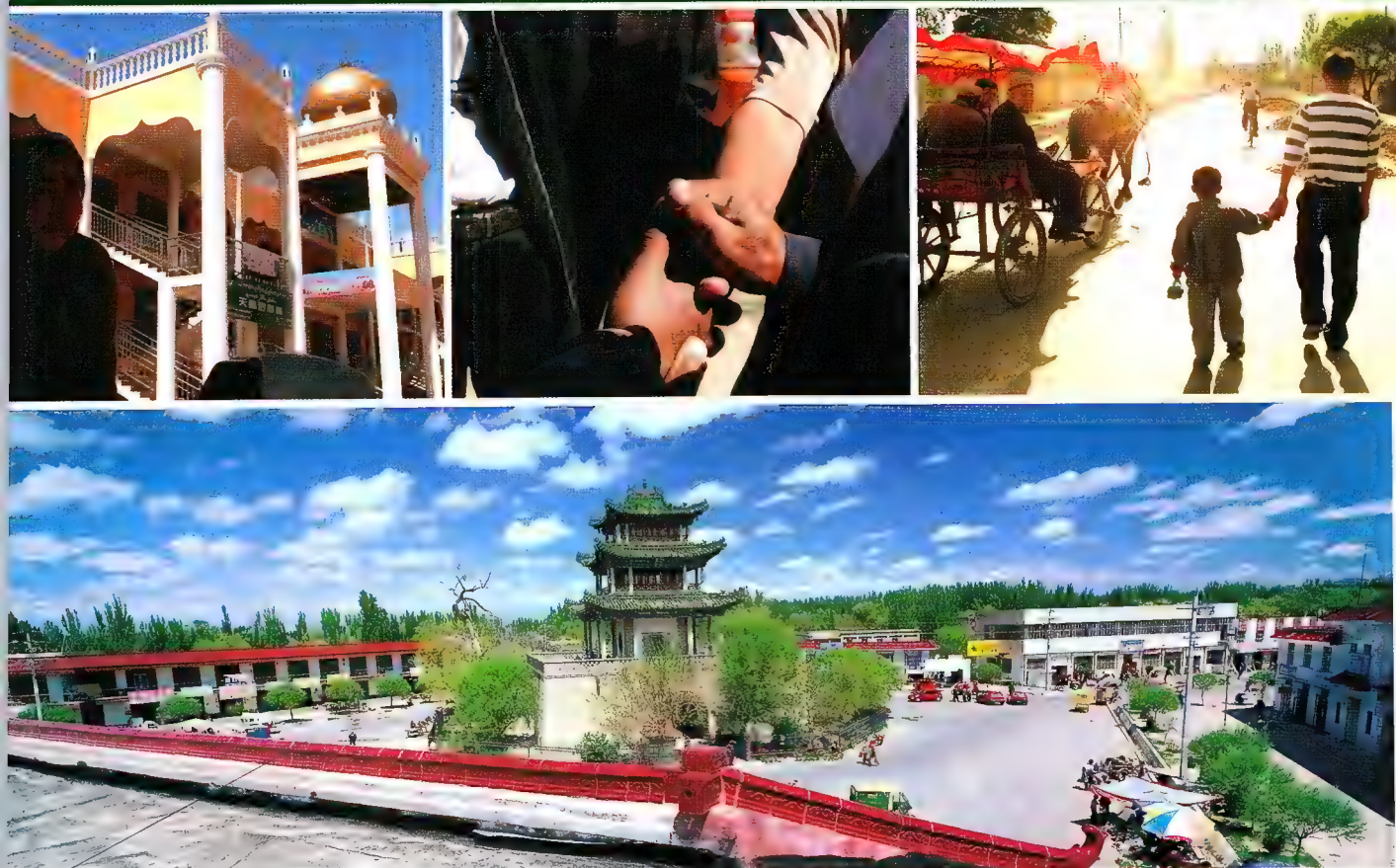
A traditional Uyghur house in an old street (by Shi Baoxiu)

Yining

A Prosperous City on the West Border

Last night we stayed at a hotel in Qingshuihe Town, which is 30 km away from the port of Huorguosi. The town somehow has a Russian flavour, and is famous for fine breed of horse. River Huorguosi serves as a national boundary between China and the Republic of Kazakhstan, and there is a bridge linking the two countries. People told me that the port used to be very busy, but now it is so quiet and only during summer peak seasons tourists would flock to this

place. However, the artefacts and textile products from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan sold in the shops are also available in Ili and Urumqi. Feng, our driver, said that when the port was first open, business was good and the market was busy. Nevertheless, when some dishonest Chinese merchants started selling defective products to Kazakh people, the people no longer wanted to do business here.



Sweet Smell of Fruit

In the morning, we hit the road in Qingshuihe Town and headed to Ili, the capital city of Yining (Kuldja). The river, Qingshui River, is the end point of Highway 312 as well as the furthest point at the west end of Highway 218. We started our trip to Ili Valley there.

We would have never expected to see such fertile soil in the wilderness of Tianshan in western China. There were endless fields and orchards with well-grown crops and fruit trees in early June. The wheat had turned yellow and would be ripe for harvest in half a month. In contrast, the wheat in other parts of Xinjiang was just half a foot tall at the time. Spring comes to Ili first before other areas of Xinjiang. Colourful fruit stalls are on both sides of the road.

Following the Footprints of Lin Zexu

In the middle of the trip, Feng drove us to the ancient city Huiyuan and pulled over there. He said Ili had been the administrative and military centre of Xinjiang, and the provincial military headquarters was situated there.

Upper left: The Islamic architectures in Yining (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper middle: Kazakh people use hand signals to bargain (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper right: Passenger horse cart in Ili streets. The fare is cheap (by Shi Baoxiu)

Bottom: Past military base of Ili — ancient clock tower in Huiyuan (by Zhao Chengan)

When we entered the city, some workers were renovating the city gate tower whose old walls were still there. At the gate, we could see the faraway clock tower. We walked around in the city and saw some horse carts waiting for passengers. There was also a goat cart.

Going further east, we then arrived in the busy and prosperous Ili City. Most of the buildings were of Russian and Arabian styles. Unluckily, there were also some awkward modern Chinese apartments in between these historical buildings.

In a quiet district, I found the Lin Zexu Museum, which was under renovation. Therefore, I could only pay my respect to the statue of the patriotic government official outside the museum. After his unsuccessful attempt to save the country by military reforms and diplomatic policies, Lin became a

scapegoat for the imperial Qing government and was on exile to Ili. Lin was a talented person with integrity. Even though being on exile, Lin fought for the welfare of the civilians and soldiers in Ili. He drew up plans to improve the transport network and irrigation systems. Those projects produced 600,000 yd of farmland for the local people.

All Things are Available in Bazaar

Saturday is a bazaar day. The pavement on the south side of Xinhua Road had become a sea of sun umbrella. Uygur and Kazakh women in gorgeous dresses formed a colourful crowd. It was lunch hour. All the cooked food stalls were already packed with





customers who were enjoying their roast mutton sticks and sausages. Milk tea was served free of charge.

After lunch, we walked around in the streets again. I saw some interesting products such as handmade soap. At first I mistook the artefacts for food as the greyish-white soap looked pretty like cakes. There were also all sorts of cheese with various shapes. Local snacks such as horse sausages and smoked horse meat are tasty. Ili saddles are not only accessories but also marvellous artwork. Ladies' ornaments made by Ili craftsman are also unique and stylish. Dried fruit, which could hardly be found in other parts of Xinjiang, were also available in Ili.

Having passed the metal tools and pottery stalls, I came to those selling silk cloth. The textile products of sharp colours and sophisticated patterns were very attractive. Nearly all the customers were Uyghur and Kazakh women. The young women were wearing colourful dresses while the old ladies dressed in gowns of extravagant patterns. The women were shopping for their favourite silk fabric and they were busy bargaining with the salespersons.

Ili bazaar is a place of colours and vitality.

The Nostalgic Air of the Alleys

After leaving the bazaar, I came to an alley by chance. First I had intended to have a quick look in the alley but I got lost because it was mazelike. It was such a big contrast between the modernity of the main streets and the simplicity of the old alleys. The window frames in the alley were all in light blue paint and they were engraved with decorative patterns. The

light blue window frames are so different from the sharp colours of Uyghur women's dresses. After passing through a few alleys, I was surprised to learn that the main colour of traditional Uyghur architecture is sky blue. The walls, doors, eaves, columns and handrails were all blue in colour. Interestingly enough, you would not see any blue on the clothing of the Uyghur people.

In one alley, there was a small mosque. It was not prayer time yet. A few Uyghur men were waiting and chatting under the tree shades outside. Despite its small size, the mosque still showed solemnity in the sophisticated patterns on its white door.

The Charming Faces of Ili Ladies

Young women in Ili like to colour their eyebrows with a black liquid derived from plants. They also use a black mineral for eye shadow. Their slim bodies are perfect for long dress. After becoming wives and mothers, the young women would gain weight quickly because of their heavy diet.

Lower left: A broom made of weeds on the riverside in Ili (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower middle: Bazaar food stalls in the countryside (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower right: A mother is wrapping her head carefully (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper left: A family of three were enjoying their ice-cream (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper right: A Kazakh family in Nilka county (by Shi Baoxiu)



The Tekes River

Major Source of River Ili

Having left Yining (Kuldja), we went east and soon came to the Ili River Bridge. In the past two days, we had been travelling along the Ili Valley and had finally reached its main stream. The river had not reached its highest water level yet and there was water only in its central part. Feng, our driver, said that the river discharge used to be huge especially in summer time when the melting snow on Tianshan flew into the three large streams, which converged at the Ili River. He also told me that the bridge has become a wedding place for many lovers. While the musicians were playing Russian oldies with their accordion, young

lovers were making wedding prayers by the river.

The Only Westward Flowing River

Ili is the most fertile as well as the warmest and wettest region in Xinjiang. Why is it so? Because the discharge of River Ili is the biggest among other rivers in the region.

River Ili is a result of the convergence of Tekes, Kunse and Kashi, which flows from east to west and



discharges into Lake Balkhash of Kazakhstan. Opening an atlas, it is easy to find that nearly all major Chinese rivers are flowing either eastward or southward into the Pacific Ocean while the inland rivers flows in all directions except to the west. River Ili is the only cross border westward flowing river in China. River Ili is 1,236 km long and 422 km of which is within Chinese border.

A Bird's Eye View of "Eight-Trigram City"

Having travelled eastward along the provincial Highway 220, crossed the Yemadu bridge and passed through Wusun mountain, we finally arrived at Tekes County.

The first time I had heard about the Tekes County

was when our photographer Mr. Zhao showed us his album "Pictorial of Xinjiang" some years ago. He had explained to me in great detail how he captured the images of the city on a plane more than a decade ago.

But who was the creator of Tekes City, which has an eight-trigram traffic network? In 1939, the chief county official who loved the Chinese philosophy of "Zhou Yi" was determined to build a marvellous city after a whole year of planning. Under the direction of a Russian irrigation expert, the city was divided by eight radiant streets. The houses were built in between the streets, thus forming the "eight-trigram city".

Left: The eight-trigram city on the fields of the Tekes Valley (by Zhao Chengan)

Right: The aerial photo of Tekes River looks like an impressionism picture (by Zhao Chengan)

Some people claim that there are other cities with an eight-trigram design in China. However, all of them have lost their uniqueness under the process of modernisation. Only Tekes has been able to preserve its original style. The ancient Wusun kingdom was in present day's Tekes. The Wusun king and queen usually escaped from the summer heat by staying in the countryside here.

The Land of Zhaosu: a Shimmering Weave

Having exited the eight-trigram city, we went westward along the Tekes River and entered the Zhaosu Basin.

The Zhaosu Basin occupies an area of 20,000 km². This place has gentle land surface and the highest rainfall across Ili. It is suitable for growing wheat, oil vegetable, potatoes and sunflowers. Feng said that in early July the fields of wheat and oil vegetable would

turn green and yellow, forming a pattern of alternate coloured stripes. Thousands of sunflowers would be blooming too. The Zhaosu Basin is not only a fertile farming area but also a natural tourist spot.

Nevertheless, the Zhaosu Basin, with an altitude of 1,800 m, is enclosed by snow mountain ranges. In summer time, when the moisture on the land surface becomes water vapours which rise to the sky and transform into hails. In harvest times, the hails would damage the crops and the farmers' hard labour would be in vain. But scientists have found that exploding gunpowder can turn the hails into rains. To protect the crops against hails, flaks have been set on the farms. Turning my eyes from the flat land to the surrounding mountain ranges, I saw some farms having many spruce trees.

While our jeep was climbing up on the mountain road, we looked back at the fields of yellow and green and the winding Tekes River below. What a picturesque scenery!




Xiata Ancient Road

Xiata River is a stream of the Tekes River and its water comes from the Muzharte glacier of Mount Khan Tengri. We went upstream and entered the less rugged area of the valley where the Kirgiz people's farms are situated.

The sites of stone statues of Turks, Wusun tombs and ancient Xiata city can be found in the woods of the valley. Going 30 km further in the canyon, you would find the Xiata hot spring. To go to Aksu in southern Xinjiang, you must climb up the glacier either by horse or on foot. The route which connects the North and South Routes of Tianshan is rugged and old. It was the shortest route for traders of the ancient ethnic groups in the region.

Beside the mountain road, there were, among the grass, some old and broken stone steps with a layer of moss. We moved on and finally saw the glacier of Muzharte in front of us. The mountain range is the

watershed dividing the northern and southern parts of Tianshan. The melting snow from the southern ranges flows into the Tarim River while the streams of the northern ranges discharge into the River Ili. The sound of river flowing, like the music of an orchestra, can be heard from the glacial landscape at night. The echoes in the valley sound like a sophisticated piece of music created by a great composer. 

Left: The sunflower gives a golden touch to the land of Ili (by Zhao Chengan)

Upper right: Xiata hot spring is accessible by vehicles. A huge glacier on the mountain range (by Zhao Chengan)

Lower right: Stone statues of ancient Turks. Most of them are found in Zhaosu, Tekes and Huocheng (by Zhao Chengan)



We left Tekes Valley and travelled eastward along the road on the southern riverside to Mohuer village in Gongliu County. There were many wild apple trees, grapes and berries in the woods. Kuerdening and Qiaxian, easily accessed by transport, are favourite scenic spots of local and foreign photographers.

Green Carpeted Nalati

For travellers who like to see the vast prairie and the gorgeous mountains, Nalati is the right place to go. On that day, we got out of Kunse Canyon and

moved eastward, passing Xinyuan County, and went to the villa on the southern shore. On the second morning, we took the bus to the Nalati Nature Reserve. With spruce hills and snowy summits at the distance, horses were roaming on the prairie, while nomadic people were sheep shearing and their kids playing with the animals. It looked as though all the land was covered by a green carpet. The prairie on the alluvial layer of the Tertiary Period is one of the most gorgeous prairies in the world. Since thousands of years ago, the prairie has been a summer pasture for the ancient Sezhong, Turkish, Wusun and Dairouzhi shepherds and those of the present day's Kazakh.



The Kunse River

Pasture in the Sky

A Paradise in Nalati

On an area near the spring, the Kazakh people were making "carpet tents" for visitors. They first set up a wooden structure and covered it with a woollen rug and a piece of patterned cloth. I had a look at the inside of the tent and saw some beautiful wall rugs and a carpeted floor. Tens of blankets were piled against the wall. There was enough room for 20 people. The hostess would start making tents in every June for tourists from all parts of the world. Visitors who are attracted by the wonderful scenery usually wish to stay longer. The southerners would even

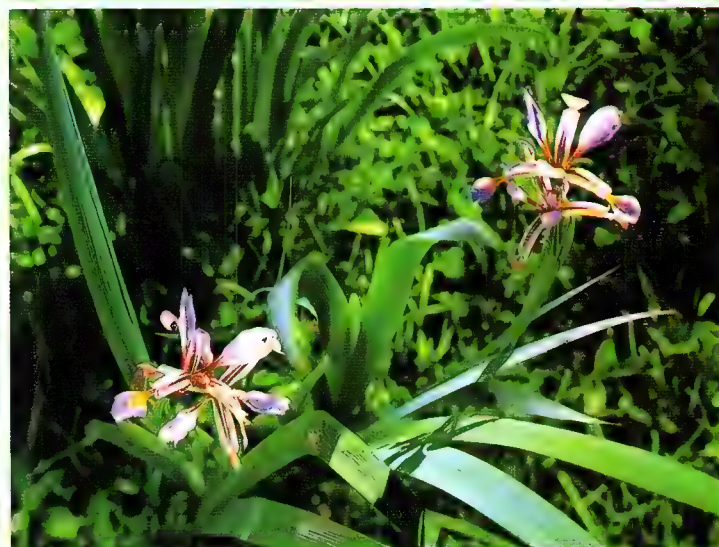
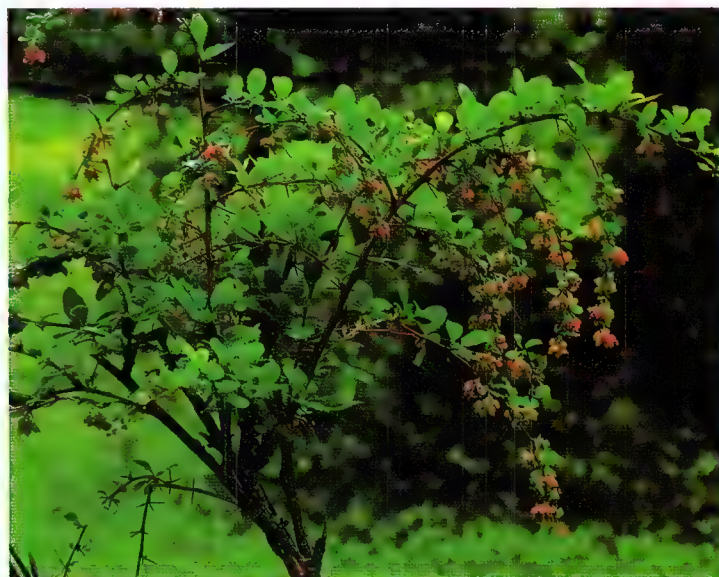
spend a whole week there and come back again the following year.

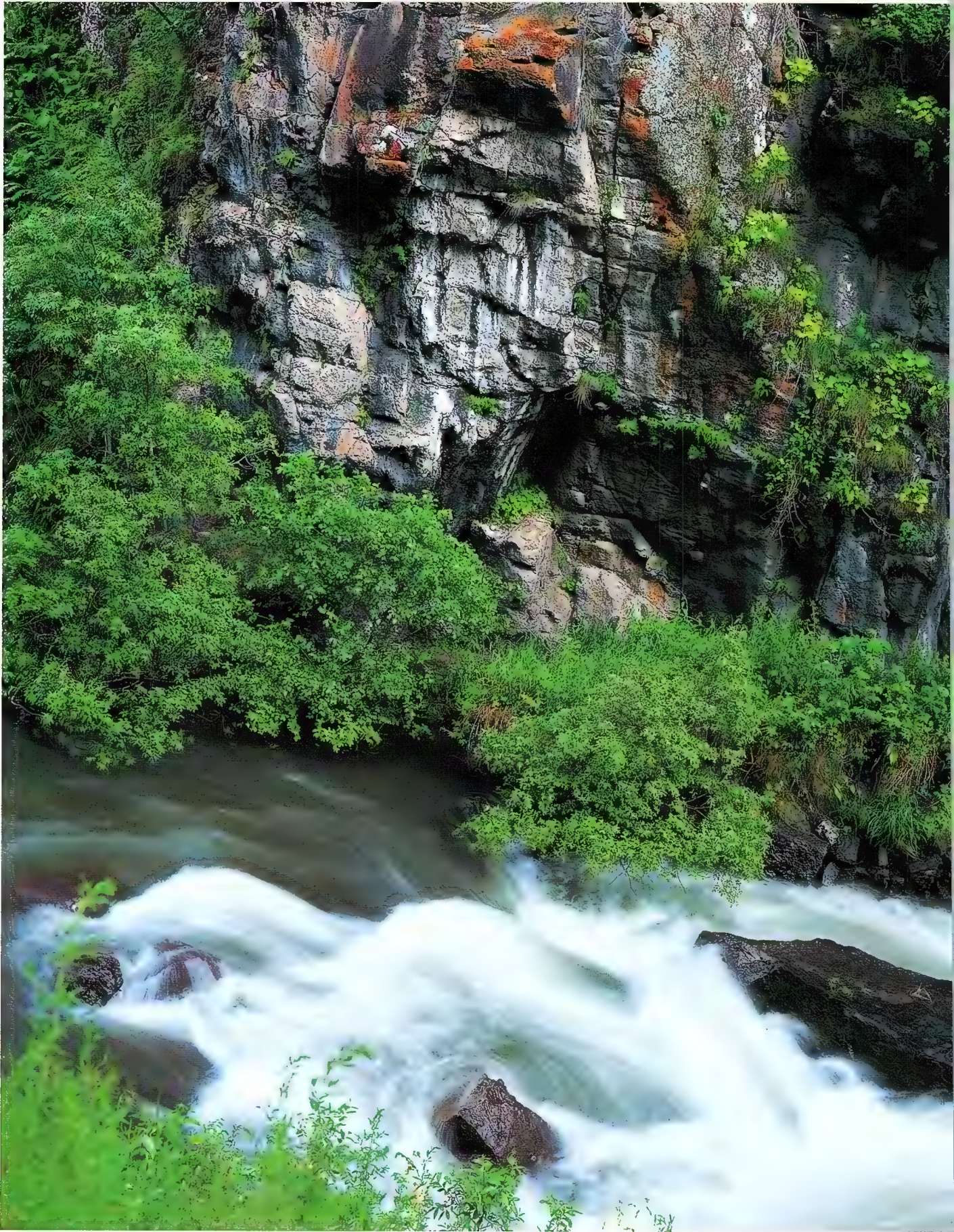
We enjoyed some hot milk tea in the tent. Then we rode the white horses of the hostess and went up to the mountain. We enjoyed the view of the prairie below from the lofty mountain. The tents among the spruce

Left: Sheep and tents on the green carpeted Ili Prairie (by Zhao Chengan)

Middle: The wild fruit flowers on the Nalati villa (by Zhao Chengan)

Right: The asters on the prairie (by Zhao Chengan)





trees looked like little white dots on a piece of green fabric. A herd of sheep roaming slowly on the pasture like the moving clouds in the sky.

Gorgeous Kunse Valley

On the second day, we continued our journey early in the morning. We travelled eastward along the river, passed by the Nalati Forest Park and entered the



Kunse Canyon. It suddenly started raining heavily that large crowds of soaked cattle, sheep and horses were running in the rain, while the Kazakh shepherds were chasing their animals on horseback to the higher places on the mountain. The Kazakh shepherds would stay there until September before going down again and staying in the valley for the winter.

After we have travelled for about 10 km, we met five to six nomadic groups. A family truck fully loaded with wooden structures, rugs and household accessories was moving upward fastly. The rain stopped and a splash of sunlight spread on the sublime mountain landscape.

In 1773, with the permission from the Qing emperor, a famous British adventurer travelled to Tianshan wanting to make a map of the mountain ranges. In his book, the adventurer wrote that he

wished to let the whole world knows the beauty of Kunse Valley.

Passing through the Icy Corridor

We turned back at the source of River Kunse, then exited Highway 218 at the Huoshao Bridge (literally means burning bridge) and travelled along the Duku Highway again to Bayanbulak. Our jeep was moving upward to the mountain top.

After crossing a ridge, we were getting close to the snow line. A flow of melting snow was crawling across the highway. To prevent the highway from being blocked by snow, workers were digging a tunnel through the mountain. We passed through an arched corridor of the highway and found that there was a thick layer of snow which is up to four metres high. To ensure smooth traffic in tourist season, a narrow path had been built by bulldozers along the snow-covered road. It felt like passing through a glacier when we were proceeding along the path.

After passing the mountain, we saw some gentler ranges and a vast prairie. In fact, it was the Bayanbulak prairie in Bayinguoleng of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region with its major population being Mongols. The different ethnic groups in Tianshan follow their ancestors' ways of living like the land following Nature's law.

The highway along Kaidu River led us to Bayanbulak town, a town where swans can be found. The town has become much westernised due to the development of swan-watching. There is only one street and yet it is a wide one with many European style buildings. To my surprise, I saw no tourists but only a few locals walking slowly down the street. Two hours later, I found out the reason.

Left: The Kunse River is the largest stream of the Ili River (by Zhao Chengan)

Right: The Kazakh shepherds are chasing their sheep up the Kunse Valley (by Shi Baoxiu)



The Disappearing Swan Lake

On the way from the tiny town to the Swan Lake, we saw only very little grass on the prairie. At the lakeside, we were shocked to find that the lake was dried up. My friend, Yang, said that the lake was filled with water three years ago, and now there is only a dried up riverbed.

On a small hill nearby, I looked at the central part of Kaidu River and saw flocks of cattle, sheep and horses on the shore but only a few swans flying in the sky. It worried me because May and June are the birth season of swans and other river birds. The land is now

full of herdsmen and their cattle, which would scare the swans. But the shepherds had no choice because very few pasture can be found near the river.

In the Bayanbulak village, the old mud houses in had turned into a few hundred apartment buildings. Since the lake became dry, swans and tourists nearly disappeared at the same time, and therefore many inns and shops were closed. The town almost turned into an empty town.

The street was quiet and only few shops were open. I saw a photo of swans and the lake hung up at the entrance of a restaurant. I do not know if it was only an image made by computer software, but I am




sure a few years ago, the Swan Lake is a lovely place.

There were indeed droughts three years ago, so the lake was dried up. However, human activities, such as over-development of tourism, are the main reason for such damage.

On the night, while we were dining at Little Swan Restaurant, we overheard the locals discussing the new regulation to make every household cutting down the number of livestock by half to reduce the pasture consumption. A feeding rotation system, which seals off over-consumed pasture for regeneration has been introduced. The locals were upset about the policy but had to accept it for their long-term interests.

Are there any balance between environmental

protection and economic growth? Can the Swan Lake regain its beauty? This leaves me in contemplation for the whole night. 

Left: The wetland along Kaidu River used to be a home to swans (by Li Xueliang)

Upper left: The gorgeous scenery of Kuerdening snowy mountains in autumn time (by Zhao Chengan)

Upper right: Due to droughts and some other reasons, the Swan Lake has become a lake without water (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower left: Over pasturing of livestock has caused damage to the prairie (by Shi Baoxiu)

Lower right: The wetland has become arid (by Shi Baoxiu)



Deep in the Valley

Home of Wild Black Bees

On the riverside along the Kunse River, there were many well-arranged hive boxes and tents inhabited by bee farmers. There I met a couple from Sichuan Province who had invested ¥4,000 and purchased a land of two yards for bee raising. They built a house and grew wheat and vegetable to support a family of four, and later started to raise bees, which were fed with wild flowers on the prairie. The business is a successful one. The husband said that every year he would carry bees to the river valleys, sometimes as far as to the areas of Ili River and Tekes River. In winter, he would return home and raise the bees in the farm. This is not a long journey at all, making bee raising here a good job.

Wild flowers in Ili are blooming from April till October. Rape flowers, sunflowers, lavenders and clovers are all blossoming in June and July. Deep in the Kashi valley, there is a rare species of black bees, which produce even more precious honey. The

farmers suggested me going there since the valley is beautiful.

On the second day, we started the trip in Nalati, passed Xiayuan County and crossed Kunse River. We entered the mountain at Heshankuo and travelled north. On the way, we saw a silted canyon and the Yanse Lake created by landslide; house roofs could still be seen above the water level. Passing the canyon, we arrived Kashi River, which runs through the whole Nileki County.

Bee Farmer Becomes Celebrity

We travelled 10 km east along the highway, in the opposite direction of Kashi River and arrived at the bee farm. It is the black bee raising area famous for the "authentic black bee honey". However, Feng, our driver, told me that most of the products were actually



honey of hybrid bees. Black Bee is a wild species with a longer proboscis that can reach deeper into the blossoms of flowers, and therefore their honey is more nutrient.

But nowadays very few people raise this species and the bees in the valley are mostly hybrids of black bees and ordinary honeybees. The price of black bee honey is about ¥30-40 / kg but ordinary honey only costs ¥8-10 / kg.

Going deep in the valley, we saw a family who is perhaps the only one around the area raising black bees. The old man came from Jiangsu 30 years ago, and started farming and raising bee in the area. He later got married and then had children. Later honey was becoming a popular export to other countries and the locals started to raise ordinary honeybees because of its high productivity. However, this Jiangsu man stuck to his black bees. Ten years later, the price of ordinary honey dropped drastically because of oversupply in the market. As a result, the price of the rare black bee honey rose and so did the fame of the bee farmer. His farm was even once visited by a Japanese company for advice.

Seeing the changes in the market, one would

normally try to expand his business. Yet, this is not a life that this man is looking for. He is happy enough to live a simple life as a farmer.

Hundred Streams and Songs

Getting out of the valley and heading east, we then arrived the Tangbula Scenic Area. Although it is called a prairie, the area is actually a land full of lofty mountains, valleys and forests. In Kazakh language, "Tangbula" literally means "stamp" and the name is a metaphor for a huge rock on the mountain which looks like a Chinese Emperor's jade chop. The Kashi River flows through the whole area of Tangbula and there are many canyons in its midstream that are good for rafting. In recent years, rafting has become

Left: The Tangbula scenic area in east Nileki is a favourite spot for photographers (by Shi Baoxiu)

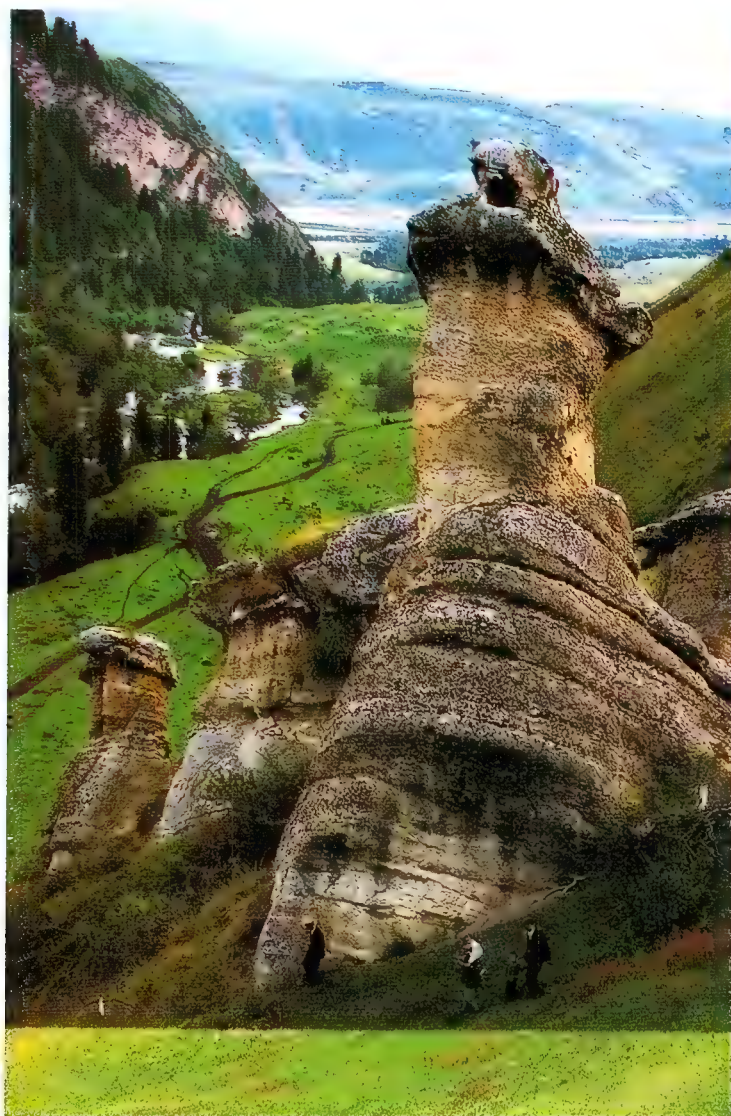
Right: The "modified" bees are the hybrid of black bees and ordinary honeybees (by Shi Baoxiu)

popular in Tangbula. On the two sides of the canyon are the lofty mountains with tops capped by snow that never melts. In between the mountains, the prairie and the valleys are forests of spruce and white birch. In autumn, the leaves of the trees turn from green to yellow, orange, red and then brown. The Kazakh myth says that this land has 113 streams and the imaginative storytellers and singers have written 113 lyrics for each stream.

Football on an Empty Field

Going further east, we passed by a village similar


to the size of Nalati. All the houses there are in an European style, and are built as luxury summer villa. We passed the mountain slope and arrived at the small Tangbula Village. There were only a few snack stalls, restaurants and tyre repair shops. Next to them are the village government office and a school. On our way leaving the village, we saw some teenagers running around and shouting happily on the field afar. When our jeep was getting closer to them, we found that they were playing football on an empty field, and their football was a ball of clothes. Beside the football players, there were some horses and cattle walking around. What a contradiction it is between the luxury villa and the primitive village.

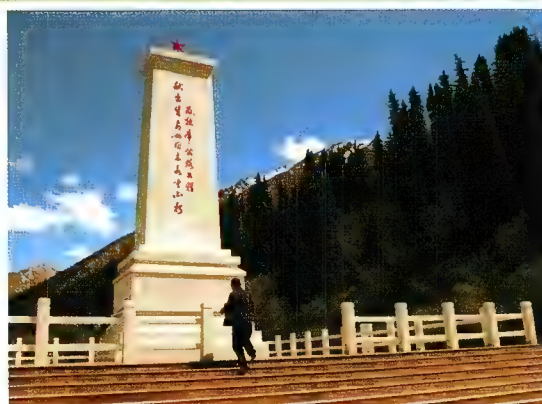




At noon, we arrived Qiaoerma and entered the Dukou Highway again. In this small town, there used to be a military supply station, and now it is a restaurant owned by a Sichuan family. The owner told me that they had been living there for four years and the restaurant only opens for a few months every year during the tourist season. There would be no visitor from November till the following May because the heavy snow would block the highway during the period.

After lunch, we went, via the Kashi River bridge, to the martyrs monument on the south side. The words "Dukou Highway Monument" is engraved on the memorial stone. The names of the 286 soldiers who had lost their life when building the highway are listed on the white jade of the rear side.

The source of Kashi River is on the snowy Daban east of Qiaoerma, only five kilometres from Kunse River. We have travelled through all the three valleys at the upstream of Ili River, which show the beauty of west Xinjiang. Leaving Ili, I told myself I must come back during autumn and winter to fully experience the charm of this vast land. 



Lower left: "The Emperor's jade stamp" on the mountain range. "Tangbula" literally mean "stamp" in the local language (by Zhao Chengan)

Lower right: The family of the Sichuan bee farmer has settled in the area (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper left: A monument has been erected to commemorate the soldiers killed in the highway construction (by Shi Baoxiu)

Upper right: In the Tangbula village, a group of teenagers were playing soccer (by Shi Baoxiu)



Getting there

Flight:

Daily flights between Urumqi and major Chinese cities

Shenzhen - Urumqi

Fare: about ¥2,840

Flight Time: 4 hrs 50 min

Guangzhou - Urumqi

Fare: about ¥2,840

Flight Time: 4 hrs 50 min

Beijing - Urumqi

Fare: about ¥2,410

Flight Time: 3 hrs 40 min

Xian - Urumqi

Fare: about ¥1,660

Flight Time: 3 hrs 20 min

Hong Kong - Urumqi

Fare: about ¥3,140

Flight Time: 5 hrs (Fri & Sun only)

Trains:

Express trains to Urumqi are available in Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Hankou, Chengdu, Jinan, Zhengzhou, Lanzhou, Dunhuang.

Getting around in Xinjiang

Flight:

Urumqi - Yining

Fare: about ¥800

Flying Time: about 1.5 hour
(multiple flights daily)

Bus:

Urumqi - Yining

National Highway 312 from Urumqi to Yining. Follow along the prairie in northern Tianshan towards the west. The distance is about 700 km. The highway connecting Urumqi and Kuitun is now opened but the route from Kuitun to Yining is

under construction, which affects the traffic. For morning bus, it takes about 12 hours to get from Urumqi to Yining. Night bus service is also available. However, travellers cannot enjoy the scenery in the dark. The long distance bus to Yining is available in the Nianzi passenger terminal in Urumqi. You can take bus no. 2, 8, 44 or 52 to the terminal.

Luxury Express 9:00 - 13:00 daily Frequency: 1 every hour

Sleeper Bus 15:00 - 21:00 daily

Frequency: 4-8 every two hours

Lower bed: ¥80-140 Upper bed: ¥70-126

Buses to various counties are available in the bus terminal in Yining. During peak season, buses depart at every 30 minutes. Enquiry: (86 999) 802 4121.

The distance between counties and scenic areas can be quite long. Travellers can hire a car or book a bus at the bus station, or use local car rental service (with a basic charge of ¥5) to arrange a journey with the car owner on a daily or distance basis.

Rental car: Travelling around in Xinjiang is often a long journey. The distance of a return trip for one scenic spot can often be 2,000 or 3,000 km. For instance, travellers have to travel 2,000 km for getting around and making short stops along the Ili Valley. Taking bus would only allow travellers to have blinking glimpses of the scenery and photo taking is out of the question. Many beautiful scenic spots are in extremely remote areas and having a rental car is essential.

Car choices: Jeep is definitely a preferred choice in the wilderness. Please note that although jeeps of Toyota and Mitsubishi have better engines and are more comfortable, the fees can be up to ¥1,000 a day, and the fuel consumption can be up to 16 - 20 L/km. Chinese jeeps are much cheaper and the daily rate is around ¥400 and the fuel consumption is lower. For less remote routes, Santana or Jetta are better choice, which are good for mountainous road surface and quite comfortable. The rental costs around ¥300 a day and the fuel consumption is about 8 L/km.

The rental fee does not include the driver's tips, payments for fuel, tolls and parking. In addition, travellers also have to pay for the driver's accommodation and meals. For a group of five to six persons, hiring a van is cheaper. "Iveco" is a popular jeep in China. The capacity of the smaller models is about 10 persons while the bigger models 16 persons. In addition, make sure to hire a veteran driver who is familiar with the area, because getting a wrong way can cost quite a lot of time (and money). For enthusiastic photographer, it would be even more important to hire an experienced driver who can take travellers to some great and uncommon shooting spots.

Two recommended drivers: Mr. Liu (Mobile: 1399 927 1381) and Mr. Feng (Mobile: 1389 983 4567).

Travel Agencies: Travellers can also book a car via Wanzhong Photography Travel Agency or by joining a local photo-taking tour. Wanzhong Photography Travel Agency: (86 991) 432 0507.

Suggested Routes

1. National Highway 312: The Smoothest Route

Departing from Urumqi. Along northern Tianshan via Changji, Hutubi, Shihezi, Huitun, Wusun, Jinghe and Haocheng. The journey is about 700 km. Charge is required for the highway section between Urumqi to Huitun. The section between Huitun and Yining is still under construction. Sayram Lake and Guozigou are on this route.

For rental car, travellers can enter the highway at Hutubi and travel westward to Hongshankuo, then enter the military highway parallel to Highway 312. Various landforms and landscapes can be seen on the way. Reaching Bayingou, travellers can either travel westward along Highway 217 to Kunse via Tianshan or go north along Highway 217 and enter Highway 312 in Dushanzi for Yining.

2. National Highway 217: A Challenging Route

Highway 217, also known as Duku Highway, is 560 km long and it was once a highway of military purpose in the 1970's. The road is rugged and winds around the hinterland of Tianshan. Driving through the three snow ranges, there are Kunse pasture and Bayinbulak prairie; passing through the great canyon to Huju and travellers finally reach southern Xinjiang. It should be the shortest route to the Ili Valley.

However, due to the ruggedness of the mountain area, there may be fallen rocks on the road while landslides happen from time to time in summer. Besides, between October and May, heavy snow would block the road. Travellers can visit the scenic areas in Ili from the east to the west along this road. Then exit Yining, stop at Guozigou and Sayram Lake, follow along 312, and finally return to Urumqi.



3. National Highway 218: A Real Adventure

On the map, it seems to be a pretty direct route from Urumqi to Ili via Baluntai and Bayinbulak prairie and the Kunse prairie. However, local drivers say that it is a tough route because of the 4,000 m snow range and the rugged road surface. Besides, the road from Baluntai to Kunse is under construction.

Itinerary

1. 5-Day Rental Car Trip

Day 1: From Urumqi to Yining via Sayram Lake and Guozigou.

Day 2: Visiting the bazaar in the morning and arrive Nalati at noon. Roaming on the prairie in the afternoon.

Day 3: Visit Nalati Forest Park in the morning and go to the farms in the Nalati Mountain area. Stay overnight in the Kunse Valley area.

Day 4: From Kunse along National Highway 217 via Yuximole tunnel to Qiaoerma. Then travel westward along the Kashi valley to Tangbula scenic area. Finally arrive at Yining.

Day 5: Return to Urumqi.

2. 5-Day DIY Trip

Day 1: From Urumqi to Yining by bus. Possible stop at Sayram Lake.

Day 2: Driving to Nalati.

Day 3: Travel around in Nalati.

Day 4: Return to Ili and visit the riverside, bazaar and market.

Day 5: Return to Urumqi.

3. 9-Day Rental Car Trip

First five days are the same as Itinerary 1. After returning to Yining from Tangbula, spend three days in Tekes and Zhaoasu and then a day on Huorguosi port.

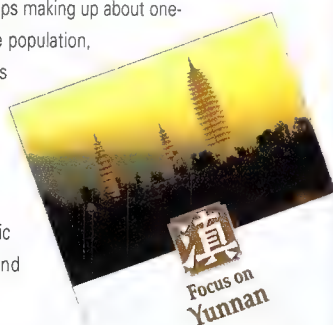


Travel Tips

Hard cover HK\$150 HK\$120

Focus on Yunnan

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



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Focus on Fujian

Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area, one of the UN World Heritage sites in China. The province's zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest in such places as the Drumming Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.



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Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis in China, and formerly the Far East financial centre, has experienced dramatic development over the past century. The world-famous Bund along the Huangpu River shows you buildings of different historical periods and varied architectural styles, while skyscrapers are rising in the new area of Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturalism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai roads.



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Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



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Focus on Guangdong

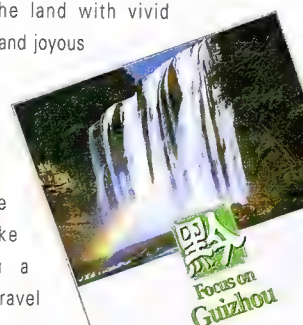
An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macao. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crag, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.



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Focus on Guizhou

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.



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Focus on Tianjin

Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River in the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, including the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.



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Focus on Xinjiang

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.



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Focus on Beijing

Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.



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Focus on Shanxi

Shanxi Province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has impressive ancient architecture and a wealth of well-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries and grottoes. Among the most famous are the Yungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff and the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist lands.



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Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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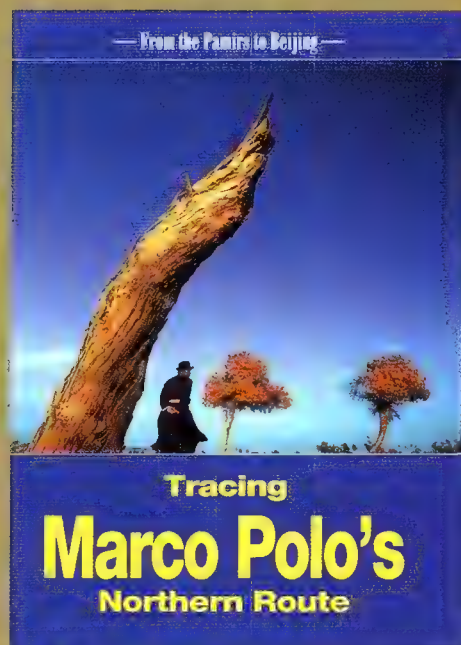
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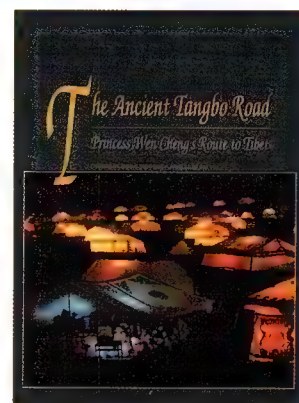
Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.



Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Marco Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

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The Ancient Tangbo Road

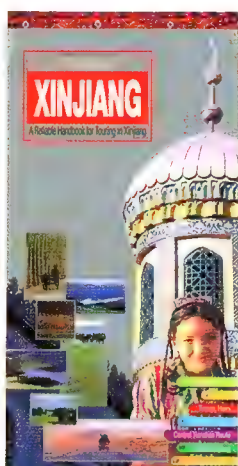
Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

HK\$192

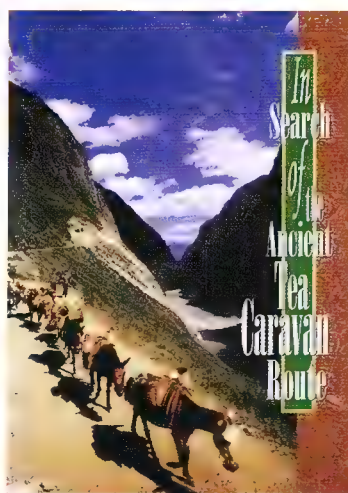
In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World".

This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.



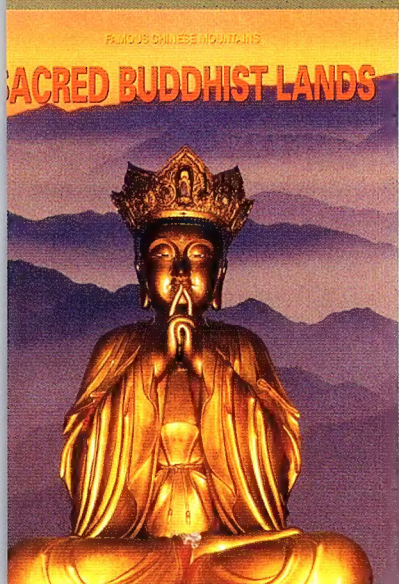
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Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Ürümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local speciality, as well as travel tips are covered.

HK\$96



Sacred Buddhist Lands

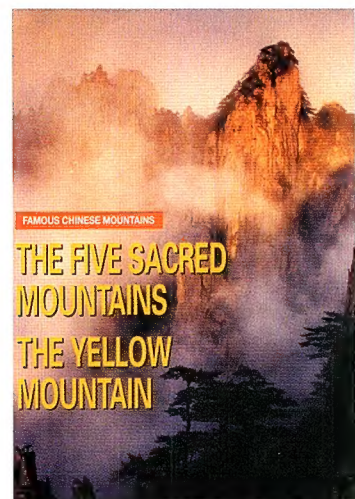
Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

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The Five Sacred Mountains The Yellow Mountain

Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

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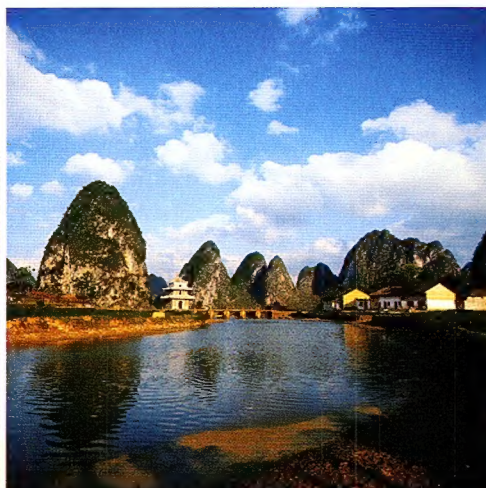
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Feature Story: **Guilin:** **New Face, Fresh Look**

Guilin, the provincial city of Guangxi, is one of the hottest travel destinations of China. Tourism contributes most of the city's economic growth. In recent years, the regional government has launched new plans, such as redeveloping the ancient towns, introducing Lijiang River cruiser, and even building hot spring villas. It is time to look at the new face of Guilin!

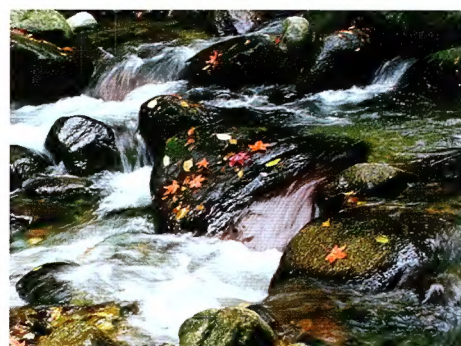


Customs: Northeast **China's Two-Person** **Crosstalk**

Two-Person Crosstalk, a performing art of Northeast China featuring agricultural and regional life, is the local's favourite in the past 200 years. A Two-Person Crosstalk is better than a meal, this is what the local believe. Travelling and living with the actors for months, the author will present us a true record of their daily life and their love for the art.

Discoveries: Autumn in **Mt Guangwu**

Mt Guangwu, a new scenic spot located in Sichuan, has the best autumn scenery in southwest China. The fallen leaves have all the imaginable and unimaginable colours — red; scarlet, orange, yellow, and thousand combinations of above. The murmuring stream, the woodlands and the wild animals... Perhaps there is no language that can fully describe such heavenly scenery. Will this become the next Shangri-La?



Culture: Chaozhou and Shantuo

Chaozhou and Shantuo, two cities in northeast Guangdong, are long the ideal choice of city-break for people living in South China. Yet, these two cities have more to offer. The people living in this area are known as "Chaoshan" people, whose ancestors were from today's Henan and Shaanxi. The traditional ritual and ancient architecture there all have an origin that can be traced back to ancient time.

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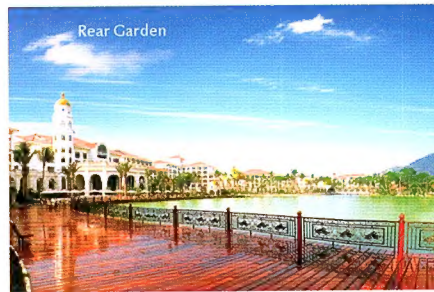
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The Phoenix City Hotel, Guangzhou has over six hundred spacious and comfortable rooms and suites. There are many kinds of facilities and convention halls available at our hotel, including Chinese and western restaurants, gymnasium, sauna and massage centre, swimming pool, tennis courts and KTV, etc.

The Phoenix City Hotel, Guangzhou is located in the traffic heart of Guangzhou, enjoying an extensive transportation network. It is an easy access to Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport, the railway station and the new exhibition complex by Guangyuan Express and Guang-shen Freeway.

The Phoenix City Hotel, Guangzhou is accepting reservation during The 98th Session of Chinese Export Commodities Fair and you could enjoy the Early Bird Discount before Sep.30th, 2005. For details please visit the website of the hotel.



Rear Garden



Outdoor Swimming Pool



广州凤凰城酒店

**PHOENIX CITY HOTEL
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Hotel Lobby

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